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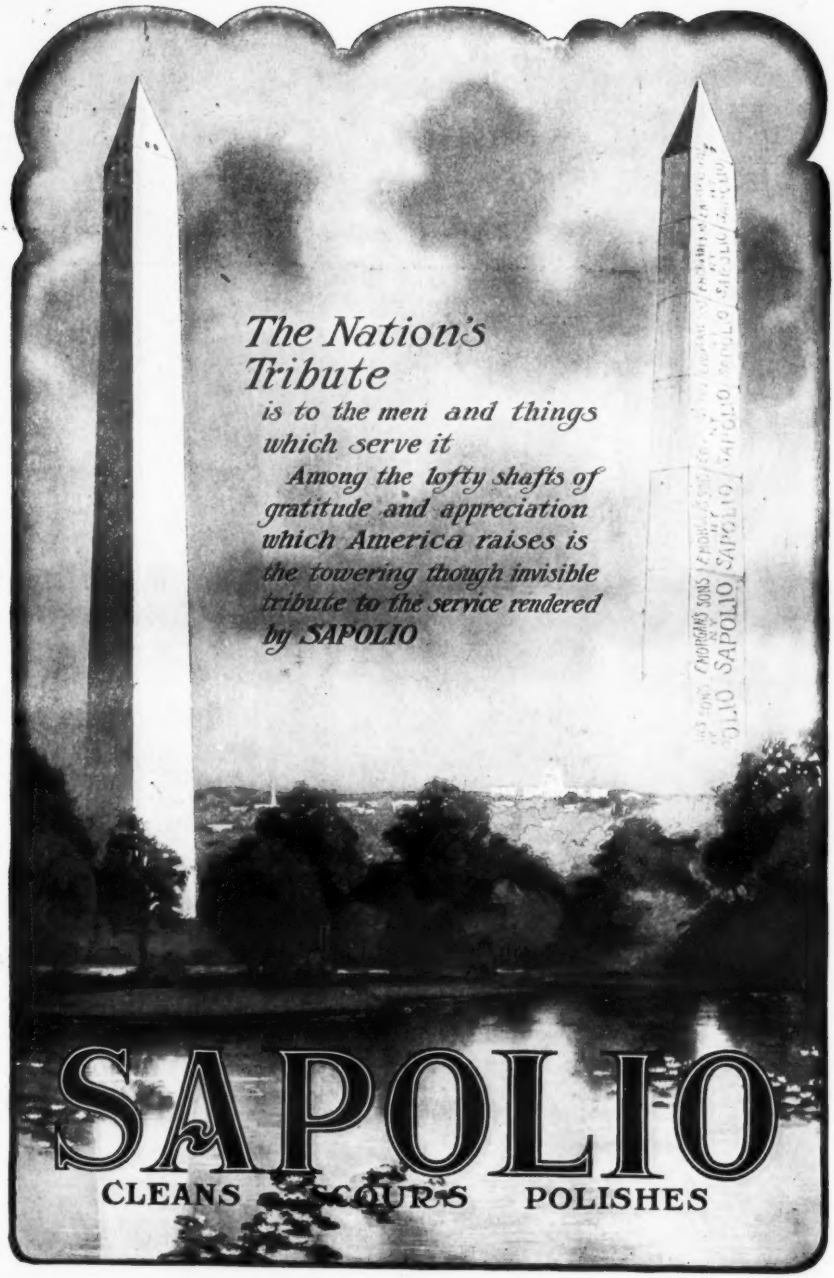
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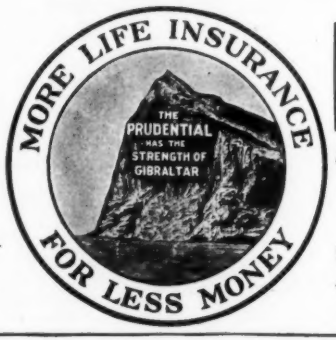
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THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

VOL. XXI — No. 5

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AINSLEE'S

VOL. XXI. JUNE, 1908. No. 5.

The INTERNATIONAL



By W. A. Fraser

CHAPTER I.

ROLAND PLOWDEN and Leonard Evans sat at a table in a small, quaint, Rye-croft-chiseled room on the second floor of the famous River Club, in Forty-odd Street, New York.

A chapter might be devoted to the picturesque nonchalance of Plowden; the brokerlike cleverness and good-fellowship of Evans; and the exclusive hoity-toity of the River Club. No man was supposed to pass the sacred portals of the River who was not of the brotherhood in purple; the shibboleth was the caste—right to address mammoth men of affairs, or social blue-blood, by their Christian names—Vander-Spiffem or Jones, it was Tom, Dick or Billy, as the case might be.

Evans was a broker, and at times a man who swallowed mines as a juggler does a sword, without effort.

Plowden was a conundrum, even to himself, I believe. He was a younger son of the wonderful Blount-Plowden family, and the Blount-Plowdens were born with an imprint of the Brahminical social thread on their skins. Roland had inherited all the caste-marks, but deuced little of the coin. The Plowdens were racing people in England, and Roland had elevated or depressed, whichever it may be, this inherited passion into a profession. For ten years he had raced a stable in America, sometimes replete with priceless stake-winners, sometimes deplete of all but a half-dozen wind-broken, gnarl-legged specimens of pedigreed bric-à-brac.

People sometimes asked where the money came from when Plowden dawdled lazily about a sales-ring and bought a half-dozen high-priced yearlings; but they let their curiosity eat itself out without questioning the buyer. Beneath his colorless sang-froid was a power of bitter retort that few cared to scratch to the surface. Even while warming himself in the sunlight of other men's wealth he maintained a silky autocraticity; there was a crackle of supremacy about his every leisurely move of muscle or speech.

A club waiter had just deposited two Martinis on the oak table, and Evans tossed his off, saying jauntily: "Gad! I'll back Joe against anything in the city to merge the liquids."

Plowden sipped his with measured reflection, his eyes fixed on the clock

querulously; his blond mustache seemed to curl upward irritably as though in unison with a dissatisfied mood.

"But what the devil are we here at this beastly hour for, Leonard—half-past six, and dressed? Does curfew ring to-night?"

"I'm going to introduce you to Javvers Baldwin."

"Good Heavens! That sounds alkaline!"

Evans laughed. "It is, I admit. Baldwin is the mine-owner from Montana that I told you about last week. He'll be one of the richest men in America in a few years."

"Thank God for the future tense, Leonard; he may be possible in the meantime. But why do we make treaty with the Javvers here? Why didn't you make it Rector's, and midnight?"

"If we were taking a friend of the elemental life for a peep at the belladonna and rouge of adorned civilization that would be the proper caper, but this is business, Roland."

"As Archias said: 'Business to-morrow.'"

"I'll explain——"

"First, at what hour do we dine?"

"Seven o'clock."

"Then, if you don't mind, Leonard, I'll lay the dust of this dry business matter—I can feel the alkali now in my throat. Order me a whisky and soda, as I'm your guest. Besides, what I don't know about business would handicap Hermes back to selling-plater class."

"But you do know about horses."

"Unfortunately, yes."

Evans, thrown off his guard by the inimitable despondency, stared.

"I surprise you?" Plowden asked. "You think I like the game? I'd far rather be a bishop with a fat living, I assure you; that's what I'd call picking a winner here below and up above. But, apropos, what's the connection between Javvers—that name hurts my throat—and horses?"

"I'm coming to that."

"No hurry."

"In the first place Baldwin owns the Swamp Angel, a fearfully rich copper-mine. I want him to stock it for ten millions; but he's got what I call Weston-the-brain—he says no New York for him."

"I like Javvers now."

"Well, I want him to anchor here, so to speak; form his mines into a big company."

"You'd assist him, Leonard, I suppose."

Evans smiled good-humoredly. "Now, a mining company is one of the most elusive things imaginable—I mean one's hold over it. I might be dumped out at a moment's notice—like this." As Evans set his empty glass down he asked: "You see what I mean?"

"I understood the glass trick, but your Wall-Street jargon is all Greek to me."

"Well, Baldwin is my friend."

"You show discrimination, Leonard."

"But I want to cinch him up tight, if you understand, and that's why I've made this little dinner—for you to meet him."

"Oh, I'll tell him to give you the mine at once to save trouble."

"I want to get him interested in New York life; get him in the social swim here."

"What excuse have you to offer society if you're caught?"

"His wealth."

"That would disqualify him, Leonard; he'd be ruled off for life. Money has got to be so intolerably cheap—all sorts of people have it now; the best families go around borrowing fivers from the second best; it makes them distinctive, you know."

"But he's really a gentleman, Roland."

"That wouldn't help him a bit; there's a big waiting-list, all gentlemen, nominally at least."

"But he's a most unusual, extraordinary man, Roland; wait till you see him. Two toughs tried to jump one of his mines, there was some sort of a gun-play over it, and I understand he killed them both."

Plowden only shook his head dismally. "That would have got him in a few years ago, but society seems filled up in

every department; got all the freak features it needs; the money is rather in the way; and just now it's a little long on Western mining men, too, since the owners have found it more profitable to live here and work the public than the mines."

"Hang it all! I'd almost forgotten the real issue," Evans suddenly exclaimed, slapping his knee. "My idea was to kill two birds with one stone, don't you see."

"I know the game well enough, but who are the fowl?"

"My idea was to have Baldwin get interested in racing through you, Roland; go in for the game, get a big stable together; your experience and his money ought to do great things in racing. He could get into society that way, couldn't he?"

"It's about the most costly way I know of. He'd have to buy a lot of horses he didn't want, and he might have to use a little discrimination in whom he beat for some sideboard jewelry, but——" Plowden puffed in leisurely silence at the cigarette, and watched its slender gray plinth of smoke spiral up to the decorated ceiling with a calm, reflective abstraction, while Evans leaned forward in anticipation of the correlative possibility.

Presently he said, half impatiently: "Don't you think it's a good idea?"

"I really think Javvers is the man to decide that, Leonard; I think neither of us would have any objections to offer. But a man who is addicted to gun-play might be difficult to pacify if he got it into his head that a jockey had pulled his horse, for instance."

"You're just the man to manage both rich owner and jockey, Roland—keep them both straight. Hello!"

Evans had taken a card from a tray in a servant's hands, and glancing at it hastily, added: "It's Baldwin. I'll go down and pass him through the turnstile."

"Ask him not to call me Old Hoss, Leonard; tell him that this racing-game has frayed my gentleness."

Plowden slipped lower into the big leather chair, and through the filmy lace of his cigarette smoke held his eyes sleepily on the landing of the stairs. A slight curiosity had been stirred in him by his companion's talk. He meant to judge of Evans' find by a first leisurely look as he was in the habit of judging thoroughbred yearlings.

There was the clank of leather soles on the oak steps, and just where the stairway debouched into the room without guard of door or rail a clubman checked Evans to ask something about stocks. Plowden's eyes dwelt minutely upon a tall, lithe, supple individual who instinctively drew two paces away, effacing himself from the confidential money-patter.

Plowden's thin lips took on a curved line of pleased satisfaction. "Gad! he's a good one!" he muttered, knocking the ash from his cigarette. "He's like a clean-limbed three-year-old that hasn't raced too much. Those claim-jumpers must have been poor judges. Yes, that chap will go straight, and for any distance; and if there's anything in a skull he's got brains. Even a horse is no good without brains."

Plowden unwound his long legs and disentangled the rest of his anatomy from the leather chair, that was like a huge basket, as Evans came forward somewhat fussily, saying: "This is Plowden, Baldwin—Roland, you'll have to call him here, in this cave of intimates. Shall we go and eat?"

A dozen paces carried the three men past a little bar to the dining-room. Plowden and Baldwin walking side by side, their arms touching, felt the passing of that curious psychological current that either tingles men's fingers to be at each other's throats, or welds their minds into a contented similitude. The elemental strength of the sinewy creature at Plowden's elbow exacted a quiet admiration—satisfied a hypercritical analysis.

And Plowden's unhurrying step, suggesting an indifference as to destination, a mute expression of superiority to events—so old in the environment of the Englishman's childhood and so new to the Western man of hustling endeavor—appealed to Baldwin pleasant-

ly. It was the indefinable charm of subjugated angles, of the mellowing age-glaze that intensifies the atmosphere of a picture.

In the three-cornered chat over the oysters Evans took little peripatetic dashes into the racing field; he wanted to get Plowden started; but the latter unexpectedly hung fire, constantly switching the talk to the West.

Finally Evans said: "Roland, don't you think Javvers could have a lot of fun on the turf in the East? He could make them sit up a bit; there's no real leader now since Wilton died. He raced like a prince."

"Well, things are not as rosy as they might be on the turf," Plowden drawled. "Some of the owners have plenty of nerve and no cash, others have plenty of cash and no nerve; but at best it's a dangerous game. Our young millionaires go at it like a boy with his first bottle of wine—too vociferously, really. They generally get loaded up with a few gold bricks which they indorse as though they were the real article; they lose a fairish bit, squeal, and sell out. It's really a man's game, you know; it's dangerous."

Baldwin watched Plowden closely as he dawdled over these observations, and when he had finished said: "You seem to take your fun seriously. In the West we don't put up any danger-signals; a man just makes his own running."

"Ah, yes," Plowden answered, "you're a stronger lot out there; here in the East ninety-nine men out of a hundred are holding their hands out for the lemon, and the hundredth man has got it ready all the time. We're easy, I tell you—because temptation is a fine art. Good Lord! It used to be just women and wine. Gad! I'd back the race-course to land more victims. A man can break away from a woman, but the pound of galloping hoofs on the drumming turf; the woof of blue, and gold, and crimson in the sunlight; the eager stretch of staglike thoroughbreds; the roar of the betting-ring, with the flutter of gold symbols in every man's hand—By Gad, man, the Colosseum, when a gladiator stood with a poised sword waiting for the turn of the thumb, must have rung like it. I tell you, Javvers, when you see your own horse with his great, clear, honest eyes looking out over the course, and you know that the big heart in his deep chest is going to almost burst while he battles for that piece of silver plate that is so proudly resting on a stand on the club-lawn—I tell you, man, you can't look at him without a thrill. He walks like the prince that he is, and you're trusting something that is truer than man, something that is as true and steadfast as a bulldog."

Plowden broke off with a sudden chuckle of amusement at his own enthusiasm. "Here, fill up your glass, Javvers; I'm talking rot—race-course rot, the worst kind."

"That's the only thing on earth that will rouse Roland to worldly interest—horses; he's got it bad!" Evans commented. "You ought to take Javvers down to Belmont to-morrow to see your horse Cobalt win the International, Plowden."

"Far be it from me to thrust any man's head into the lion's mouth. I was the unfortunate one to take young Lancaster to his first race meeting, though I was simply putting up with an infliction in doing so, and to this day his family consider that I was his Mephistopheles."

"Bosh!" ejaculated Evans. "He was a weakling. He fell in love with and wanted to marry Lillie Roy, and I know for a fact that our own grandfathers used to flirt with her. She was so old that they asked her to revise Genesis out of her own knowledge."

"Besides, in my case," Baldwin protested mildly, "it wouldn't be a novitiate; I've raced in a small way, in the West."

"Naturally; I'd half forgotten the inevitable jocund mood of the West," Plowden interjected. "Where every other man lives in the saddle, naturally there must be a tendency to rivalry of steeds. Cowboys and Indians are forever racing their cayuses, I understand. That's nothing; the harmfulness of the thing is the gambling, which we have

here. Must be deuced picturesque to see half a dozen cowboys, their legs steeped in leather and their souls in liquor, coming up the main street of Red Horse Gulch on the dead gallop, encouraging their pintos and buckskins with the crackle of musketry."

Baldwin smiled indulgently at Plowden's picture. The man's well-modulated voice was entirely devoid of the ring of sarcasm.

"We really do it a little more up to date than that, you know," he objected. "And as for betting, a piker with us is one who bets his gold in small lots, by the quart."

"Well, I say!" Evans cried exultantly. "You don't need the Anthony Comstock people to look after you then, Javvers. You should most certainly go to Belmont to-morrow and bet five bushels of gold on Plowden's horse."

"No, I hardly think it, thanks. One game at a time is enough for me, and the mining-game carries plenty of thrills, I assure you. I'm afraid I sha'n't have any time to go to races or anything here—I'm going to cut away to the West as soon as I can."

"Sorry for that," drawled Plowden. "If you really care for horses I should be delighted to have you come with us." He turned toward Evans, adding: "The Holmans, and of course Rosey, are going down with me in the machine."

"Rosey is Lord Rosemont," Evans explained to Baldwin. "Senator Holman and his daughter are both great chaps, aren't they, Roland? You'd have the time of your life, Javvers; why the deuce don't you go? Perhaps I'll slip down by train and join you there. You'll have mines enough when you get West—take a day off."

The speaker's eagerness was evident. Baldwin had sat somewhat constrained, poised in a quiet negation, but at the mention of Senator Holman's name he had started slightly, and his brown eyes had lost their placid look of listless objection, lighting up with some new interest.

"Who is Senator Holman, may I ask?" he said presently.

"The drollest ever," Plowden answered. "He butters the saddest sort of bread with a creamy humor that turns it to cake."

"Fairly ambiguous," Evans objected. "Javvers asks *who* the senator is. He's a Westerner, like yourself, Baldwin; Idaho, I think, was his stamping-ground. He's got some sort of a mine out there, too; at least he'll have it when he gets it out of the courts; it's tied up in litigation; some highwayman is trying to bunco him out of it."

"There you are, Javvers," Plowden commented. "You and the senator can talk mines between races, for if Rosey has his way we sha'n't have much of Miss Holman's company."

"I believe I'll accept your good invitation," Baldwin said decisively.

"Splendid!" ejaculated Evans. "Already I see you winning the Brooklyn or Suburban next year. We'll have our coffee in the other room, and a smoke."

"I'm off," Plowden objected. "Got to go—engagement for nine o'clock."

"You're a slave to the shining lights, Roland," Evans declared. "A social evening, as usual?"

"No, I'm due at Mrs. Vanderspiffen's At Home. I'll pick you up at your hotel at one o'clock to-morrow, Javvers; where shall I find you?"

"Javvers is at the Waldorf," Evans advised.

"All right; at one o'clock to-morrow. Glad you're coming. You'll like Holman. And if you can bring Rosemont a cropper to-morrow, even run him wide at the turn, I'll make you a present of Cobalt."

Half mystified, Baldwin looked quickly into Plowden's face. There was no semblance of a smile on the composed well-cut lips; the lazy eyes held just a quizzical look—that was all; and holding out his hand, the next instant Plowden's shoulders disappeared down the stairway.

"Sit down, Javvers," Evans pleaded, swinging one of the big leather chairs. "We'll sip our coffee and buck a bit. Queer Yankee-Englisher, Plowden."

"I like him," Baldwin declared laconically. "He has no loose sleeve."

"No, nothing hidden. And yet, about his horses he's a clam. Did you notice that he didn't say a word about Cobalt winning to-morrow, though he's a good thing for the International."

"What did he mean by my upsetting Lord Rosemont?"

Evans laughed. "That's another thing he generally keeps his own counsel about; never heard him make a break before on that topic."

"It would have been premature, considering that we've only met."

"I mean, about Miss Holman and Rosemont. You see, Plowden's a bachelor. Strange, too, women like him; a dozen rich girls have thrown themselves at his head. I believe that it's because he's so devilish indifferent himself; women seem to like men that treat them like old boots. But Roland was really smitten in the Holman quarter, though I don't think the girl reciprocated. Of course she's something like Plowden. Galatea in her statue condition wasn't a bit more indifferent to man than Beth Holman. Then Lord Rosemont appeared on the scene—the Holmans met him in England—and, between ourselves, I believe it's all the old lady's doing, dazzled by the prospect of the aristocratic alliance. Besides, Lord Hawthorne—that is Rosemont's father—has got unlimited coin."

"Still I don't see why Plowden suggested——"

"Oh, he wouldn't have said it if he hadn't taken a great liking to you. Roland says some deuced queer things at times, but there's generally something behind it all. It was a tip for you to monopolize Miss Holman, and give Rosey a miserable afternoon. And when you see the girl you won't mind, I can tell you; and when you meet Rosemont you'll want to do it anyway. He's the limit. 'Twice-born' is written all over his face; he thinks we're savages over here."

"I think I'll absorb racing atmosphere and the senator's mixture of humor and mines; I'm not very facile in woman-talk. Just now, if you don't mind, I'll walk back to the hotel; I want to stretch my legs."

"I'll jog down the hill with you, it's on my way."

CHAPTER II.

Notwithstanding Baldwin's avowed diffidence and his expressed intention to hobnob with the senator, by three o'clock Lord Rosemont was having a most uncomfortable time in the Club-House at Belmont. In fact this disquietude had its genesis almost from the time Baldwin entered Plowden's automobile at the Waldorf.

It was the owner's strategy that Javvers had a seat immediately facing Beth Holman. "Those quiet brown eyes of that chap are about as compelling an affair as I have seen for many a day," Plowden whispered to himself, "and they ought to stack up fairly against Rosey's coronet."

They really did. Titles, and lands, and money-bags have not an illimitable fascination for properly balanced minds and hearts; often greater, more compelling, than these large toys, is the subtle something that passes wingless, voiceless, from mind to mind—it is as unmakable, indestructible as the electric current.

Of course neither of the two children was aware that the atmosphere was surcharged with anything but just the glorious exhilaration of the June day through which they sped, mile upon mile, with the easy glide of birds; and the woman saw the man broad of brow, straight and lithe as an Indian, and eyes and skin that shouted of clean living and God's sunshine; and the man saw violet eyes that forever and ever came back to his face happily like a little girl's.

Perhaps Rosemont felt this tingle of the passing current of affiliation, for he emphatically justified Evans' comments of the previous evening. He was a good talker where he could hold the boards and discourse upon English politics, or families, or even hunting in India; but on the run to Belmont the talk, beginning with Plowden's horse, Cobalt, had filtered to the West, where the senator nailed it down solid.

By jinks! He had ridden a cayuse there in his younger days that would have given all these long-legged dandy race-horses the time of their life for a hundred miles.

When Rosemont said something about over-jumps, the senator exploded: "Jumps! By jinks! I'd race the best horse in England over the Catskills with one of them buckskin-constituted broncos."

After a time Rosemont lapsed into monosyllabic Ahs! and Reallys! ambiguously expressing languid astonishment as Baldwin, drawn out by the senator, talked a little of the great West and the big way of its people.

But by three o'clock, when the second race was on, Rosemont's restlessness had filled Plowden with unholy delight.

They had all gone down to the paddock to have a look at a two-year-old, a big, slashing Watercress colt that Plowden was starting; and Beth, declaring that Baldwin must come to know some nice girls, had taken him away from the men.

This was Mrs. Raney's opportunity to flag the coronet train; she had two daughters, and an indifference as to which one, Georgie or Adèle, should land Lord Rosemont from the lonely waters of singleness, supposing he was landable. So mother and daughters swooped down upon Rosemont.

The gentleman cursed softly under his breath. He was veritably being crowded out at the turns.

When the two-year-olds, the babe race-horses, streamed out from the paddock like a line of marching schoolchildren, Plowden figuratively grasped the Raney entourage and Rosemont in his arms; corralled them; they must all hurry up and get good seats on the balcony of the club to watch his colt, Water-Carrier, spread-eagle the field.

Rosemont hung fire, solicitously fearful that Miss Holman might miss the race; but Plowden rushed his lordship with: "Oh, come on; they're all right! They see us—they're coming now!"

And Mama Raney, drawing toward the Club-House, passed Rosemont her race-program to mark.

Captured by superior force the irate nobleman surrendered, cursing the plenitude of good friends. The rasping voices of the two Raney girls, guiltless of intonation, sawed their way through the drums of Rosemont's ears till he was, as he confessed to himself, "jolly well fighting mad."

Mama Raney had maneuvered Georgie into the front rank with Rosemont up the club stairway, and, toiling heavily behind with Adèle, she puffed: "It's all a yarn—Mrs. Holman says it's a love-match between Beth and his lordship; the poor man just can't get away from them when the mother is about. If she has got heart-disease it has just come through her worrying and scheming to land the title for Beth. His lordship just hasn't a word to say to the Holman girl here to-day—do you notice that, Adèle? The senator's as poor as a church-mouse anyway! Noblemen only marry American girls when they've got millions."

"Where shall we sit?" Plowden asked as they came out on the balcony.

"By Jove! I shall have to go and get some cigarettes," Rosemont pleaded.

Plowden languidly drew a silver case from his pocket, saying: "You'll miss the race—I want you to see Water-Carrier trim that bunch; here, put half of these in your depleted case. There are some jolly seats—and a table, too!"

Again Rosemont was kidnaped, while his captor, Mrs. Raney, was in the seventh heaven of attainment.

The little delay in sitting down frustrated Plowden's further maneuver of segregating Beth and Baldwin, for, with the senator, these two suddenly arrived and joined the others.

The two-year-olds had paraded, and were now going to the far end of the chute for the straight run-in of five furlongs.

The senator, leaning over the rail, watching the massing of the youngsters at the start, said: "They look just like a band of Apaches reconnoitering a white man's camp. Here they come, by jinks! Get your guns out, boys."

The campus of the great edifice reechoed to a multitude of sounds as

though the people were making ready to receive cavalry. From the blotch of variegated color-impact—like a huge bow of many-colored ribbons—the racing babes, steered by babe men, now spread out like the leaves of a fan, swerving in their half-tutored stride, and swept up the broad stretch of course in a line that reached from rail to rail. Half-way, and something in the middle drew out like the leader of a flight of wild geese; they raced in the form of a harrow.

"That's Water-Carrier," Plowden drawled, his glasses focused on the chestnut point of the harrow.

"I'm so glad, Roland," Beth cried eagerly; "he's winning."

At the sixteenth pole the big chestnut, galloping with his great stride, seemed to flounder; he rolled in his gallop. A lean blood-red bay, his black legs cutting the space with the clean sharp cleavage of a knife, was creeping up on the outside, his midget boy lying flat to the wither, letting him have his head. How straight and true he ran; what was the curious inherited instinct that held him straight as an arrow, that lost not a foot in angling swerve. His was the speed of symmetry of motion and unquenchable courage; and against this the greater power, the greater stride of the chestnut.

Now Water-Carrier had steadied; he was galloping truer; the rushing challenge of the bay had roused his flagging courage.

"Say! This *is* a horse-race!" Senator Holman cried.

"The bay's got him!" a tensioned voice cut in just behind.

"The chestnut's only cantering," somebody answered. "His boy's just kidding."

"Kidding? Not any—the colt's quitting. Those Watercress youngsters are all soft-hearted; big counterfeits; when anything gamer collars them they just die away to nothing."

"This fellow won't," the other persisted. "He's a race-horse—he's like a three-year-old."

"If I owned a Watercress," whined the thin voice, "I wouldn't start him till he was three-year-old. Their bones are big and soft."

The voices of contention stilled, silence fell upon the club as its people, hushed in their eagerness, watched the mighty fight of the babe thoroughbreds as they drew so swiftly toward the finish.

Always creeping up, inch by inch, the bay, his lean neck stretched as straight as a fiddle-string, challenged the other again and again.

"Gad! What a horseman!" Plowden muttered, his glasses flashing for an instant on the boy that, glued to the bay's neck, rode as guiltless of distressing movement as though he were a length in front.

"Water-Carrier's too much horse for little Roddy," he added, as he saw his jockey essay with rein and knee to gather the big chestnut. Then pink and blue swept by the finish, and the Club-House broke forth in divided opinion as to which had won.

"I guess that's a pretty tight squeak," the senator declared. "But when I see two bodies parading together I generally lean toward the heavier; seems to have more speed with less fireworks. I'd back the chestnut now."

"I've got it," Plowden said quietly, lowering his glasses from the number-board; "but I'd have bet anything that the bay, Ovid, had won; he's a devilish game youngster that."

"You ought to charge that Water-Carrier of yours with gasoline next time, Roland," the senator advised.

Plowden started for the paddock to have a look at his colt; as he turned away almost running into Mrs. Vanderspiffen and her young sister. The lady was more than felicitous in her congratulations, detaining Plowden to ask if that were not Lord Rosemont in his party.

"Beautiful!" Plowden muttered to himself. "The gods are raining good things."

"Delighted to introduce you to Lord Rosemont," he offered. "You know the Holmans and Mrs. Raney. Rosemont is very anxious to know all the

best people—he's perfectly charmed with Americans."

Then he darted back with the reenforcements, and feeling that Lord Rosemont was completely blockaded, said to Baldwin: "Come and have a look at the colt; he's one of the finest babies you ever saw."

"May I see the brave chap, too?" Beth asked. "I think he made a gallant fight."

As the two men brought Beth back to the club after seeing Water-Carrier shampooed with the medicated water, rubbed dry, and carefully clothed, Plowden said with a regretful drawl: "I hate to lose Cobalt, Baldwin, but I really think you are justly entitled to the horse."

Beth, looking suddenly into the young man's face, saw it flush, and next instant the red was chased away by a curious wave of embarrassment.

Plowden gave expression to a soft chuckle and Baldwin smiled hesitatingly.

"What's it all about?" Beth asked. "Is Mr. Baldwin going in for racing—has he bought Cobalt?"

"Ah!" Plowden's expression was a sigh of satisfaction; he nodded toward the group they had left at the little table. "The charm of our American women is irresistible to an Englishman. Look at his lordship holding court."

The full idea dawned upon Baldwin, enlightened by the expression in the speaker's face; mandragored by the charm of Beth's holding power, he had been entirely oblivious of the fact that he was the big part of the conspiracy. Under the pretext of acquiring a cigarette, he said: "Just call it off, will you, Plowden. Of course it's deuced good fun to you, but—well, from now on I'll find it unpleasant."

"All right." Plowden strode on to where Beth was waiting half-way, saying: "Get Lord Rosemont and the senator, Beth, and we'll go in and have a cup of tea. I think those two old ladies are about to pull each other's hair."

The fourth race was the International Steeplechase, which was supposed to be a good thing for Plowden's gray, Cobalt. And returning from the paddock with its saddling of the big timber-toppers, Rosemont sighed with satisfaction when he found himself in the seat beside Beth, and no prospective intrusion of interested outsiders.

"Ah, really, this is much better," he said complacently. "That last race I had an extraordinary busy time; the ladies had all their Mother Eve with them—they kept me tremendously busy explaining why the horses did this or the jockeys did that."

"I shall have to look to you for information, Mr. Baldwin," Beth said demurely. "Lord Rosemont is fagged—mentally."

"Say!" cried the senator. "I've got to have a bet on this race. Plowden's going to win it with Cobalt; I'm going to have five dollars on him."

"Rather uncertain betting, jumpers," Rosemont objected. "I prefer a run for my money, don't you know."

"Oh, Cobalt won't fall, if that's what you're thinking of," Plowden declared. "He's the safest jumper I ever owned, and Raden's in the saddle, where he generally sticks till the finish."

"Thought your chasers were rather half-schooled over here," Rosemont drawled. "At home a horse has got to be at the game several years before he can negotiate a stiff course like Aintree. Saw one of your steeplechases the other day, seven starters with two to finish—deuced leg-weary at that."

"I guess that makes it a better thing still for Cobalt," Holman said. He fluttered his program to a club commissioner, who, in answer to the call, came hurriedly to where they sat.

With large ostentation the senator drew forth a five-dollar bill and laid it impressively in the commissioner's palm. "All on the gray," he said solemnly.

"Don't you bet in England at all, Lord Rosemont?" Beth asked, with delicious simplicity.

"Oh, rather! Lord Hastings squandered more land than we can see here on a couple of races."

"But *you* don't bet?"

"Oh, really, indeed I do. I'll have a

pony on the gray," he said, nodding to the commissioner.

The betting man blinked his eyes, smiled deprecatingly, and seeing the tremor of a laugh hovering about the girl's lips, had an inspiration that the Englishman was drawing him. Unlimited chaff and one miserable five-dollar bet was not too much to his liking. A quick retort rose to his lips and he said: "This is not polo, sir; there are no ponies."

Plowden cleared the atmosphere by: "Lord Rosemont means twenty-five pounds, Samuels. Write him down the odds to a hundred and twenty-five dollars. What's Cobalt's price?"

"Eight to five, sir."

"Well, put me on a thousand to win."

"And five dollars for me," Beth added. "If Cobalt loses collect ten from the senator."

"That settles it, by jinks!" growled Holman. "I've got a hunch that's a hoodoo, that bet of yours, Beth—we all lose. A cinch bet would ruin any proposition. I remember in the early days in Idaho——"

"That's an after-dinner speech, father." She turned toward Baldwin. "You know father can always draw on Idaho for a reminiscence when he's suddenly brought to his feet."

The commissioner had written down the bets in his little book, and now held it tentatively in his hand, asking politely; "Is that all, Mr. Plowden?"

"What about you, Baldwin?" Holman asked.

"What's that big bay horse's name?" Javvers cross-questioned.

"Hidalgo, sir," Samuels volunteered. "He's not fancied by his stable—he cuts it sometimes at the jumps."

"Anything might win in a steeplechase, by Jove!" Rosemont declared.

"Hidalgo is ten to one in the betting," Samuels suggested. There was a persuasive intonation in his voice as he lingered a little on the alluring odds.

Baldwin drew a yellow-backed bill from his pocket, and with an apologetic smile to Beth, passed it to Samuels, saying: "You might split that—fifty win and fifty place."

"Oh, Lord!" groaned the senator. "A hundred would buy the horse!"

"Five hundred to fifty win and two hundred to fifty place," Samuels voiced this entry as he wrote it down.

As his short legs carried the betting man toward another wig-wagging program, the girl exclaimed: "Why, you're a traitor to the camp, Mr. Baldwin! I thought we were all going to win, and now some of us must lose—it's too bad!"

"One of us!" corrected the senator.

"I'm unfortunate in betting," Baldwin explained, "always lose. If I were to bet two bits on Cobalt he'd fall at the first fence."

"By Jove!" interjected Rosemont. "That's as strange to me as my pony was to the bookie chap."

"Two bits is a quarter," Javvers elucidated.

"Oh, I see—a 'bob,' as we call it at home—a shilling. Deuced odd expressions one comes across here in America."

"Besides, I like the look of that Hidalgo," Baldwin broke in, feeling somehow that Beth was still unconvinced of his motive. "He's the type of horse I should pick for a steeplechaser—rangey."

"He's a flighty-headed beast," Plowden volunteered, "but he can go—and jump, too, when he will. I think he did win a steeplechase somewhere once. If anything happens to Cobalt, shouldn't be a bit surprised to see him land the stake. It strikes me you're a pretty fair judge, Baldwin."

"It's hardly that," Javvers demurred. "I'm always the man in opposition, it seems. Thirteen is my lucky number—at least, I cling to it."

"You, with superstitions!" Beth's eyes widened a little in wonderment. "I always associate superstition with weaklings; but you——" She checked herself abruptly.

"By jinks! I wouldn't give a brass farthing for your bet, Baldwin," the senator chuckled. "You've backed a gyrating buck-jumper. See him at the post; he thinks he's joined a circus."

"Upon my word," ejaculated Rose-

mont, "I should hate awfully to run a valuable horse with that unschooled lot. Why, they're immeasurably worse than a lot of Shetland ponies wild on the hills."

"Ah!" It was Beth's voice, killed at once by a slaughtering uproar proclaiming the start.

Directly across from the stand, on the far side, the horse leaped into the loosening reins; and at once Hidalgo rushed into the lead, his mouth wide open, fighting against the check of the bit. At his side was the gray.

"I told Raden to get away in front and stay there," Plowden explained quietly. "Cobalt's good enough to make all his own running and win from end to end. I was a little afraid of that crazy brute, Hidalgo, bringing him down."

"The way those jockeys ride would bring anything down," Rosemont lisped.

A silence fell on the little group, for the two leaders, the gray lapped on Hidalgo's quarter, now raced for the first wall, the Liverpool.

"That'll settle Hidalgo, I expect," the senator said.

He was answered by a gasping cry from the crowd that was like a moan from the reeds of some mighty organ, as, rising at the wall, Hidalgo swerved, as if half-repenting his temerity, and the gray, checked in his swinging leap, struck, pitched headlong, his hoofs quivering in the air for an instant, and then the curtain of the green brush blotted out the pink jacket and the iron-gray, and the cataract of bay and chestnut and black-coated thoroughbreds streamed brokenly over the Liverpool and flowed away on the level with Hidalgo galloping lengths in the lead.

Beth could see Plowden's cheek quivering as he sat in grim silence, his glasses leveled on the wall that hid his priceless horse.

Men were running from the starting post. Now they lifted something that was grotesquely like a doll gaily dressed in pink silk; already the ambulance glided around the earthed flat-racing course.

Once Plowden saw a splash of gray as Cobalt's head lifted futilely and then disappeared. He slipped the glasses into the leather case with a tired expression, and said quietly: "Poor old Cobalt has broken his back, I fear. I'm glad Raden's not badly hurt—he's able to walk, I see."

A stout, solemn-faced man came hurriedly through the Club-House, and addressed Plowden, saying: "It's too bad! It's bad business, I fear, sir. Old Cobalt's done for, I'm afraid. I'd better have Doctor Saunders put him out of pain, hadn't I, sir?"

"We can't do anything else, Gordon. And do it quick, if the horse is suffering."

The words of the two men drew Beth's eyes to the speakers. The trainer's gruff voice held a world of softness, and she saw that his abrupt speech hardly held mastery over the quivering lip. Even Plowden's face, that years of control had schooled in passiveness, looked drawn, as though he fought against recalcitrant nerves. She felt her own eyes blur; she was possessed of a curious mixture of sympathy and exultation that strong men really held hidden in their hearts a gentleness that the death of a brave horse brought so patently through the veneer of cynical stoicism. She heard Baldwin's voice with relief; he was saying: "Plowden, I wish I hadn't backed that cursed horse; he killed yours—a better one."

"It's all in the game, my dear sir; and you're going to win your bet, too. Hidalgo's got one of his *on* days."

And it looked like it. The bay, still running free, his terrific speed taking him along at a heart-breaking pace that fairly smothered the others, took each jump almost in savagery, his headlong pace carrying him crashing through the brush once when he struck, the upper rail clanging loud and vibrant from the ring of his hoofs. The very hold the jockey had on Hidalgo's head, in the way of unavailing restraint, lifted the horse as he sprawled from this mad leap.

"I guess I take it all back," the senator growled. "One of us wins, is what I meant."

"It's the rotten seat of those jocks," Rosemont complained; "riding between the horses' ears as though they raced on the flat—that's what brought Cobalt down. There goes another—By Jove! He absolutely shoved the horse's nose into the turf."

The black, Sancho, had ripped through the brush at the water-jump, pitched on his shoulder, and his jockey careened over the grass as though shot from a catapult.

Then around the lower turn and up the back-stretch, strung out, the four horses that were still on their feet straggled in Indian file, with Hidalgo in the lead.

Plowden sat with his eyes fixed moodily on a little knot of men that stood by the mud wall that hid the fallen king of the steeplechase realm. He saw them swerve away from the jump, and they were dragging something of weight, as the silk-topped racers came at it for the last time. Now they were all over.

Suddenly Baldwin's broad shoulder loomed between Beth's eyes and the course, as if in rude carelessness; ostensibly he was showing something written on his program to the senator.

A sensation of annoyance fluttered the girl's mind like the discovery of a flaw in a rare emerald. She had been weaving an atmosphere of chivalry about this strong Westerner. Now Baldwin had withdrawn his bulk. A little film of smoke floating lazily skyward from near the Liverpool against the background of some distant trees caught the girl's eye. She saw the group of men detach themselves from the fatal jump, and come plodding across the infield. Suddenly the full chivalry of Baldwin's act dawned upon her—he had blotted out the shooting of the gallant horse.

And Plowden was sitting with his back to the course facing her. Surely it was good to know some things that were in men. Almost evilly sounded Rosemont's voice querulously drawing their attention to the execrable horsemanship of the jockey on Hidalgo, who had sprawled over the last two jumps that were but brush and rail, and, tired from his fierce pace, was now crawling home a winner.

"I must say," ejaculated Rosemont, in a disgusted voice, "that I never saw a more tawdry sort of thing in my life. What I really can't understand is why it is called an International—not an English horse in it."

"There was a Canadian horse, Ben Boone," Plowden explained wearily. "He might have won, but I fancy they've given him too much of it on the winter circuit."

"Ah! I hadn't thought of Canada as a nation, you know," Rosemont drawled. "In England we rather—well, we actually don't take much notice about the Colonies in sport, you know. I fancy an English horse—what I mean is a horse of the Grand National class—would give any of these steeplechasers a stone and beat them quite handily."

"I think Cobalt—poor old chap—would have held his own with anything in England," Plowden answered quietly. "I've seen some of the best jumpers in England, years ago, but I never saw anything there better or truer, with more speed or stamina."

"Well, I've lost a fiver!" interjected the senator; and added philosophically: "But we've got one lucky picker in the contingent, anyway. Commend me to a man from the Pacific slope to get on to a good thing. Now, once, when I was in Idaho——"

"After dinner, papa. Here comes Samuels; give him ten, please, and look happy."

"Here, my man," called Rosemont, "I owe you twenty-five sovereigns."

Plowden nodded to the commissioner, saying: "I'll bring you a check down tomorrow."

"I'm awfully sorry, sir," Samuels said. "I think it was a dead open-and-shut for your horse if that fool-skate hadn't fouled him."

"Why did he call him a fool-skate?" Rosemont asked, when the commissioner had gone. "Terrifically funny expressions these bookies have. It's quite bewildering to come across all these curious names. Now in England we'd call a bad horse a ranker or a rotter—

there everybody knows what it means—but 'skate,' as applied to a horse, seems hardly the proper caper, does it? But what I should really like to see is a proper International—a race between one of our good English horses, ridden by an Englishman, and one of your American horses with an American up. Of course not a scramble of two miles like this, but the Grand National course, four miles and a half. That takes some jumping, I assure you."

"I've seen it many a time," Plowden said reminiscently.

"By Jove! Then you'll understand what I'm driving at."

"There's another race on, the horses are going out," the senator interposed. "I've a notion to try and get my five dollars back on that sorrel with the molasses streak down his back-bone. A horse of that color is always tough."

"They're only maiden selling-platers," Plowden offered; "it's a more casual sort of race than the steeplechase, even."

"Besides, you're spoiling sport, father; Lord Rosemont has a scheme for the humiliation of the Stars and Stripes."

"Really, where was I at?" Rosemont queried. "Oh, yes, Aintree. Those are jumps if you like. I'm average height, and I give you my word, I could hardly see over the big black fences of the Grand National. And the chasers have thirty jumps to do—by Jove! I ought to know, I've ridden it. Talk about the Liverpool across there that Cobalt came to grief at, you should see Becher's Brook in the Grand National."

"Do the horses have to swim it, Lord Rosemont?" Beth asked innocently.

"I don't think there's such a very great difference," Plowden spoke with lazy indifference, as though Rosemont's enthusiasm bored him. "In my young days I rode at Sandown—there were three nasty fences just at the foot of the hill, all together, they were. And I've ridden at Windsor—a regular maze that course is, in and out, all over the shop, first one side and then the other——"

"I know it," interrupted Rosemont. "Terrific corkscrew affair; and we used to call riding at Aldershot mountaineering, the jumps were so bally big."

"I thought so when I was in England," Plowden said, "but seeing other courses extends one's horizon. I think this big course here with its jumps takes the tuck out of a horse quite as thoroughly."

"Can't agree with you," objected Rosemont. "Put Becher's Brook beside that water-jump of yours—why this is like a bathtub by comparison. Becher's has a thorn fence four feet ten high—there's a two-foot rail in front, and on the far side a natural brook eight feet wide and four feet deep. And when Garratt Moore won on Liberator, by Jove, he cleared the whole shooting-match with a clean six feet between the ditch and his horse's hoofs where he landed."

"Well, I heard some of the men at the club saying that the English Steeplechase jocks that were over here a few years ago couldn't ride for sour apples," the senator commented somewhat irritably. "And perhaps some of those big jumpers would peter out just the same way if they were over here."

"Hardly, senator," Rosemont ejaculated. "I've got a chaser in England, Sandstorm—he was third in the Grand National last year—and I should like nothing better than to match him against the best horse in America. It would be a ripping good test, don't you think?"

"Sorry I can't oblige you, Lord Rosemont," Plowden lamented. "If Cobalt hadn't come to grief I should like to take you up."

"If I were a racing man," Beth added, "I'd match a hunter I've got, Heros, against your Sandstorm."

"Ah, but it's all 'ifs,' don't you see," Rosemont protested, "so I suppose we can't settle this question."

"I shouldn't mind taking you up, Lord Rosemont."

Baldwin's words startled the little group. Somehow they looked upon him as simply a novice that had blundered upon a piece of luck.

"Ah, really? You are quite in ear-

nest?" The inflection of doubt in the Englishman's voice was tantalizing.

"Quite," Baldwin replied. "I've a horse, Patriarch, that has raced at 'Frisco, and I've really had a desire to see him pitted against some of the Eastern cracks. I think from what I've seen that he'd have won here to-day quite handily."

"I hardly think that means much," Rosemont objected. Then he added contritely: "With Cobalt out of it; I fancy he was really a good horse."

"You bet, that Hidalgo is no slouch," the senator contributed. "My idea of a horse is one that wins at ten to one. If I owned horses I'd take care that I had long odds when I did win."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do," Rosemont began. "I'll bring Sandstorm and another chaser over from England, and you get your Patriarch or any other horse you like ready, and I'll run the best one of my pair against him in three months' time. How does that strike you? A fairish distance, of course."

Beth's eyes hung questioningly on Baldwin's face; they were asking if he were in earnest. Even Plowden had roused from his lethargy and was waiting for Javvers to accept the challenge.

"Make it three miles," Baldwin answered. "I like this course, it's big and roomy." He turned to Plowden, continuing: "When do they race here again?"

"In October."

"Well, we'll run here in October, three miles over the jumps, best and best horses. You can bring as many as you like out of England, Lord Rosemont, and I'll produce a jumper bred in this country. Nominate the horse by name on the first of October."

"Splendid!" ejaculated Beth. "Quite like a treaty!"

"What do you run for?" queried the senator.

"Oh, for love—just for the glory," Beth corrected herself.

"Ah! Hardly stake enough," Rosemont argued. "A set of tennis just for love is all right; but we must make it worth while. I'd say five thousand pounds; that would give it éclat."

"That would suit me," Baldwin replied. "Twenty-five thousand dollars."

"No doubt the Jockey Club would add a piece of plate," Plowden suggested. "But what about riders?"

"Owners up," exclaimed the senator. "I guess that queers the deal."

"Not at all," protested Rosemont. "I'm out of condition now, but I rode Sandstorm to a winning at Manchester."

"I'm agreeable to ride Patriarch, or any other horse, if I can do the weight," Baldwin agreed. "I could ride at one hundred and sixty-five with a little starving."

"Ah! That's what?" Rosemont twitched thoughtfully at his small black mustache, doing a sum in mental arithmetic. "Ah, I've got it!" he cried triumphantly. "Eleven stun, eleven."

"That would save you wasting, Lord Rosemont," Beth remarked.

"By Jove! I'd have to get into condition for my wind, you know. Your New York people are such gormandizers that I've got pig fat since coming over."

"Whoop!" yelled the senator. "Buckskin's won! I knew he would just because I hadn't a fiver on him. And he's fresh as a daisy—could win the next race."

"What do you say to getting back to town?" Plowden asked tentatively. "Have you two chaps settled this match?"

"I'm on for it," Rosemont declared.

"Yes, I think it's quite settled," Baldwin affirmed.

"Let me hold the stakes?" Beth asked, smiling.

"That would be quite proper—if it were just for love," Plowden said.

Unconsciously the girl's violet eyes found Baldwin's. She turned away quickly, an embarrassment flitting across her face.

"Well, Baldwin looted the bookies anyway," the senator said thankfully as they took their seats in the machine.

"I never enjoyed the races so much in my life," Beth added; she spoke ab-

stractedly as though communing with herself. Then she stretched out her gloved fingers, touching Plowden on the arm and said: "Forgive me, Roland; I know how you feel. I had forgotten."

"I feel as though I had seen my dearest friend die," Plowden answered quietly. "But both men and horses must take that chance, work or play."

"I've seen them die by the dozens on the Bad Lands in the West," Senator Holman declared, "but somehow to-day when that gray went down it made me feel pretty tarnation blue, I can tell you. A thoroughbred seems to sort of come in between horses and men—he's a gentleman, when he is one."

CHAPTER III.

July and August had come and gone; hot months that grilled the city dwellers in flesh and spirit. People of volatile temperament grew irritable, and those of phlegmatic habit sullen.

There was just a little less of heat-torture where the Holmans' apartment overlooked the Hudson from Riverside Drive; fairly well up it was, Ninety-seventh Street. The two months that had simmered into a cremated past had been followed by a cooler September.

There were several reasons why Senator Holman had not fled the scorched city. Out of habit he was a man of location, liking his always chair whether at the club or his own dining-table; and the turmoil of a severance from his accustomed environment to new quarters appealed to him as worse than a few hot days. After all, it was not so bad where they were; the leisurely rolling Hudson, with its jade-colored waters, always to be seen from their window, carried somewhat of alleviation. And beyond, the green-clothed hills of New Jersey broke pleasantly the yellow-smeared sky with its radiating sun-flame.

Rosemont, too, had hovered about the city, peripatetically perhaps. His two horses had arrived from England in July, the wondrous Sandstorm and another of almost equal reputation, Parliamentarian. These chasers were quartered at Belmont Park.

Rosemont spent part of his time at the big hotel at Sheepshead Bay, sandwiching sea-bathing in between the gallops that were to fit him and the horses for the double task of establishing the superiority of the English-bred article and scoring over Baldwin.

Baldwin had brought Patriarch out of the West, and in addition had purchased Hidalgo, and, like Rosemont, had installed his horses in the Belmont stabling.

The English horses had stood the voyage well, landed in good shape, and being strong-conditioned horses, good doers, seemingly were going on as though they were on their native heath. Indeed, in the way of familiarizing Sandstorm with the American way of going, Rosemont had started that horse in a steeplechase over the short course, two miles, at Gravesend in September. Sandstorm had won, seemingly with something in hand. True, the class he met in that race was not much; but he had shown a great flight of speed, and though he had hung somewhat in his jumps yet he had not blundered.

Rosemont was elated. But Plowden assured Beth that the English horse had been tiring at the end, and a first-class chaser would have beaten him.

Rosemont had imported a professional jockey to assist in schooling the horses, and he had ridden Sandstorm in the race.

"You'll see," Plowden said to Beth, "that Rosemont won't do as well. Sandstorm has got a temper like Robert-the-Devil had, and Lord Rosemont is peppery himself, while Jowkes, his English jock, is like a Cheshire cheese for imperturbability. The horse knew that and he behaved. When Rosemont is in the saddle Sandstorm will feel it in his sensitive mouth that the reins are in the hands of a man who is on edge and he'll cut up rough."

Taking a line through Hidalgo, Baldwin found that Patriarch was extraordinarily good. As is so often the case in a working gallop, running with a stablemate, Hidalgo galloped much truer than

he did in his races; but even giving his very best running, Patriarch could smother Hidalgo; and the farther they went the easier Patriarch held the other safe.

The big International match had been much discussed, there was great interest in it; and when Sandstorm won his race in such clever style the accepted opinion was that the Britisher would win. Here he had shown plenty of speed, and a horse that had been placed third over the tiring four-miles-and-a-half of the Grand National course must be a stayer, horsemen reasoned.

Rosemont's suspicion that Baldwin had come into his life disagreeably that day at Belmont had now fructified into a conviction. With considerable resentment he had observed that Beth Holman was often in Baldwin's company at the track while his horses were being worked. True, Plowden was sometimes of the party, but not always.

Rosemont brooded over this presence of a rival till he became irritable and apprehensive.

With an instinct inherited from successive generations of diplomatic ancestors he had somewhat judiciously paid his strongest court to the girl's mother. Beth's very indifference, or unresponsiveness, was the inspiration of this idea, and, naturally enough, also incited, through opposition, Rosemont to a greater determination.

It was toward the end of September that Rosemont called at Ninety-seventh Street to have a most serious talk over the whole situation with Mrs. Holman, really preparatory to an interview of moment with Beth.

His lordship was in two distinct and entirely antithetical moods; he was depressed by an exhibition of what he called the extraordinary unconventional American way in which, unchaperoned, Beth chummed it with the young Westerner. He had culled this word from the girl's own vocabulary, uttered when Rosemont had expressed, somewhat guardedly, his surprise at the latitude she took. Beth had answered laughingly: "Oh, we're great chums, Mr. Baldwin and I; we are patriotically putting our heads together to defeat the British."

With considerable submerged anger Rosemont had strode away muttering to himself that putting heads together brought hearts together also.

But as antithesis to this anger was a buoyant exhilaration over a piece of information he had come by; and with this *coup-de-main* Rosemont found himself vis-à-vis that same afternoon to Beth's mother.

Mrs. Holman was in every way a strange embodiment of contradictory forces. She was a woman of most decided likes and dislikes. She was negative in appearance, yet positive in the hidden mentality that her physical weakness seemed to absolutely deny. She disbelieved in a great many things, horse-racing being her particular *bête noire;* but she had an immaculate faith in her husband. With her it was a voiced belief. She had been known to assert that the senator had been actually robbed of the Presidency.

Toward Beth she held a selfish pride in the girl's evident class and patrician quality; breeding and descent were to Mrs. Holman ambrosial breath that was ever in her nostrils.

With an almost silent force, like a noiseless dynamo, she ruled the senator, and to an extraordinary degree Beth. She had a powerful weapon in this controlling power, oddly enough, in her great weakness, her heart. Heart-disease was the Damocletian sword that hung forever suspended above the loyal heads of the husband and daughter.

Rosemont was thoroughly cognizant of how the reins of government were held in the Holman demesne. Perhaps his subtlety would have been despicable if the jewel of desire had been wealth, but he was immeasurably in love with the girl, and played the game according to the laid-down rule that all's fair in love and war. Tremendously solacing, this Tontine system, when one reaches for unfair weapons.

Rosemont had taken a chair with a despondent lassitude that had caused Mrs. Holman, keenly observant as she always was in infinite detail, to say:

"The heat of our summer has been most trying, Lord Rosemont. Our people laugh at Englishmen complaining of the continued sunlight, but really I found the clouds in England a beneficent veil. Beth is burned to a berry. Why she frizzles in a hot sun—but it's horses, horses, horses!"

"By Jove!" Rosemont ejaculated, somewhat abruptly. "That's just what I called to speak about, Mrs. Holman."

"Horses? Don't, please!"

"No, about Miss Beth and—well, her great friend, Baldwin."

"I wasn't aware that they were what you would call *great* friends, Lord Rosemont; I hardly think that any of us look upon him in just that light."

"Your daughter does; perhaps, don't you know, friend is even too formal a word."

"Ah, Beth's standards are, well—they're Beth's standards; she's so diffident that if she were just barely friendly with a man she'd look upon it as a tremendous concession. Great friendship, really! You've found her that way, haven't you, Lord Rosemont?"

"By Jove! I have. That's just why I'm rather put out now. She hardly treats me as—well, I think I had a right to anticipate an acceptance, a favorable consideration."

"You are almost too modest about it, Lord Rosemont, and I'm sure too much concerned now. It's just Beth's way; she understands perfectly the situation. She's just asked for time, that's all, and I think that was for your sake more than for her own—you were just a little impetuous, Lord Rosemont. It was a great honor you were bestowing upon my daughter."

Rosemont made a gesture of disclaiming.

"Beth knows quite as well as I do, Lord Rosemont, that there are what we call great catches in this country, heiresses to immense fortunes, that would feel such an alliance extraordinarily attractive, and I think Beth wanted to be sure, leave you quite free to—you know such matters consummated in haste often afford opportunity for repentance at leisure."

"You speak of other women, Mrs. Holman; there are no other women for me. Circumstances might make an heiress desirable to even an English nobleman; probably he might live far more happily with a wife of unlimited means if his own estates were encumbered, but in my case it's quite different. If I hadn't met your daughter I should probably never have married at all—I dare say I should have been fairly happy, but having known your daughter I shall be miserable all my life if she refuses to become Lady Rosemont."

He drawled seductive intonation into the title. It caught. A light glinted in the rather negative blue eyes of Mrs. Holman; she answered decisively: "Beth *will not* refuse, Lord Rosemont. I can promise you that. You have been patient; awfully good—most considerate. Beth has her own way of doing things. She's very determined—she inherits that from the senator; as you know, he has an unconquerable will; if he had been a little more yielding perhaps now he would have been the first gentleman in the land—President. But Beth is as true in her loyalty to her parents as she is determined. Besides, she has never loved any other man."

"Ah, but I also fancy that we might eliminate the word 'other.'"

"Not at all, Lord Rosemont. You are like every man possessed of the grand passion. Unless the lady carries her heart on her sleeve, you are immediately possessed of a Pandora's box, forgetting that hope is safely tucked away at the bottom."

"But I must say that Miss Beth seems tremendously taken with this Westerner who is supposed to be very rich."

"In England, Lord Rosemont, you have a confidence in your girls of aristocratic families, knowing that they quite understand the inevitable value of caste in selecting a partner for life, and Beth would never choose a man that is essentially ordinary when Lord Rosemont has done her the honor to proffer

his hand. You know ours is a very proud family. My people, the Winthrops, trace right back to Harold Winthrop who was the second son of Lord Edgefield, and the Edgefields were Cavendishs. The senator's family, too, was Virginian; he is of one of the very best Virginian families, the Newports."

"It's all evident in Miss Beth," Rosemont replied. "Lord Hawthorne remarked upon her extraordinary quality after your visit to Hawthorne Castle."

"Beth is undemonstrative. Of course she is different with me, her mother, and if, by any chance, you could play eavesdropper when we are having our little confidences, I should not have to advise you to just trust Beth for a little. She hasn't given you any real cause for uneasiness—you haven't asked her to become Lady Rosemont and had her refusal?"

"You advised me to wait."

"Well, when you do ask Beth, I assure you you'll both be made quite happy."

"You see," Rosemont began hesitatingly, "my concern about the friendship between Mr. Baldwin and your daughter was not purely selfish, there was something else——" Rosemont broke off, seeing a startled look in the placid eyes.

"Pray tell me what it is, Lord Rosemont. Beth has not done anything foolish."

"She doesn't even know about it. I hate awfully to mention it—it's like taking an advantage—it's this Mr. Baldwin, you know. But I'm interested, and I think you and the senator should know about it."

"I'm sure we should if you think so."

"I do—I'm sure of it. By Jove! One shouldn't really have compunction when a chap's playing a double part."

"Mr. Baldwin?"

Rosemont nodded.

"I never liked that young man. There was too little about who he was and his family, absolutely nothing. And as for his mines—well, they're a long way off, and mines are little more reliable than race-horses, I think; they've practically ruined the senator's prospects. The great future he had before him lies buried in a grave a thousand feet deep somewhere in Montana or Nevada."

"This is about mines."

"If it's trouble, I've no doubt it is."

"I don't wish to startle you, Mrs. Holman, you must——" Rosemont hesitated and hung expectantly on the lady's assertion of strength which came at once.

"Oh, I'm much better—I'm quite strong since the weather cooled. Besides, you're never abrupt, Lord Rosemont. If others were as considerate! Now tell me, please. You know I'm not at all interested in Mr. Baldwin's excellencies."

"Well, it's simply this, Mrs. Holman. I was told, on most reliable authority to-day, that this Mr. Baldwin is the man who has made all the trouble for Senator Holman over the Lone Ledge Mine; in fact, it was his lieutenant, a disreputable Western gun-man—I think that's the idiom—who jumped the Lone Ledge."

"I felt that we should hear something dreadful about that young man if we ever heard anything. I'll tell Beth about this."

"I wish you wouldn't, Mrs. Holman. This affair of the mines is purely a question of the courts to settle—it will all come out then. But to mention it now would—well, perhaps give him an advantage. He's rather a plausible chap, and no doubt he would manufacture some extraordinary story to tell your daughter, and then we should really be put on the defensive. And really I don't wish to—I'd rather not win Miss Beth through her knowing Mr. Baldwin as being unworthy; I should prefer to have her like me for myself. This is just for you and the senator, that's all—for a time, anyway. Promise that you won't mention it to your daughter. As you know I have the senator's interests at heart—almost as much as you have; he appeals to me as a great man, really a great man."

"I'm glad you think so, Lord Rosemont; I *know* it. If he had received his just deserts and been elected Presi-

dent of this great country of ours the world would have known it. His name would have gone down in history beside those of Lincoln and Washington!"

"I'll tell you my pet scheme, Mrs. Holman. You would hardly give me credit for being the student that I am. With Lord Hawthorne's influence—my father is a cabinet minister—I'm sure I could obtain for the senator the appointment of Minister from the United States to the Court of St. James."

"So kind of you, Lord Rosemont. The senator would justify your confidence, too."

"But first we are going to win that suit over the mine, then the senator will be in a position to do full justice to his big heart. In fact, it was our man, Connors, from whom the senator bought the mine, who told me to-day that Baldwin was the power behind the throne—the man who had put up this other disreputable person to claim the Lone Ledge."

"The senator is out now; he'll be back in half an hour. Will you wait to see him, Lord Rosemont, to tell him this?"

"I'm sorry, but I must go—I really must. Please assure the senator that it is advisable to keep this information absolutely secret. He's not to let Mr. Baldwin even suspect that we know. Our man Connors has some tremendously clever scheme on with his solicitors, and I beseech you not to let your daughter have an inkling. Good-by, Mrs. Holman. Don't rise, *please!* There, that's gracious," as Mrs. Holman held out her thin hand, the bluish veins showing too prominently beneath the ivory-hued skin.

"Don't worry, Lord Rosemont; you know what girls are—pardon me, I wrong you—your charm is that you don't; you're just a little too unspoiled for your own complacency. Girls like to be conquered—they find victory in defeat. Just give Beth a chance to capitulate gracefully; your very station makes her timid."

As Rosemont dropped from the Holman apartment in the elevator, Beth came to the drawing-room where her mother sat with closed eyes, painting large a mental picture of the beatitude of life at Hawthorne Castle.

"I'm not sleeping, Beth," she said, as the girl was about to retire.

"Oh, I thought I had observed Lord Rosemont's chocolate-colored mobile turning the corner of the drive."

"Beth, the art of turning a kindly phrase about real friends is greater than a facility for causticity. I enjoy Lord Rosemont's well-bred conversation."

"It's non-exciting."

"Very little is accomplished by excitement, Beth; besides, you wrong Lord Rosemont when you think him incapable of virile interest in anything. To-day he was quite agitated."

"Was it clothes, mother—an inharmonious prospect as to check vesting and buttons because of our importers' bizarre tastes?"

"It was a question of bizarre taste if you like. Why are you so inconsiderate as to encourage this mining man, Mr. Baldwin?"

Beth laughed merrily. "That's it, is it, mother? Do you know what Lord Rosemont said the other day at the club?"

"I never listen to club stories, not even from the senator." Mrs. Holman flicked a scrap of paper from her dress with a fan.

"Well, father's club stories are—well, you know what they are like, mother, even if you never listen to them. But Plowden never brings anything but a few fallen rose leaves, pretty perhaps, but not heavy odored. Rosemont had been rather jaded over America—you know he's hardly enamored of what we loyally call God's Own Country—and Bancroft, in desperation, said: 'But the American women are thought to be very beautiful, Lord Rosemont; New York is full of beautiful women, every foreigner says so.' Lord Rosemont answered—oh, heavens! I can hear his blasé drawl—'Ah, by Jove! but a man can marry only one of them!'"

"But what has that got to do with the matter under discussion, Beth?"

"Simply that Lord Rosemont has no

justification for mentioning Mr. Baldwin."

"I think I understand; meaning that you can marry only Lord Rosemont."

"Meaning that if I must marry him, mother, I have no intention of also encouraging any other man to believe that he has any right to ask me for anything more than my friendship."

"I don't like the word must, Beth; I am sure your father is not going to coerce you, and all I've ever done has been to act as Lord Rosemont's confidant, tell you of his devotion. He's naturally a proud, reserved man—breeding has stamped that quality with many others upon him; beneath his studied reserve he has an extraordinarily generous nature. You know what he's done for the senator. Out of delicacy Lord Rosemont has pretended to be eager to invest a large sum of money in the Lone Ledge Mine as a matter of profit. I think he even deceived the senator in this; but I know it's done simply to help your father."

"Bribery and corruption, mother."

"Don't be so egotistical, daughter. Lord Rosemont knew that the senator was eating his heart out because of his altered circumstances; he also believed that if financed, your father could again become wealthy through this mine."

"Mother, it is confusing! I believe that Lord Rosemont is good at heart; I believe that he's fond of me; I know that he has helped father—that he likes him also; but it's bondage; it antagonizes me; it's a barrier; perhaps if it weren't for this, I should like Lord Rosemont better. I try to now—I have tried; I realize what is expected of me. We three are a community, loving each other, willing to lay down our lives for each other, but, mother——" The girl stepped behind Mrs. Holman's chair, took the thin, pale face in her hands and kissed her. "Mother, it's a fearful sacrifice. Not the life there at Hawthorne Castle, not Lord Rosemont himself, for he's better than the average, but it's just the one great something; the freedom that we all cherish, to give or withhold the heart. If I loved Rosemont, if my heart went out to him, I shouldn't feel that his title, his position mattered; but I don't love him, mother, as a woman should who accepts all he has to give."

"Wheel up a chair, girl. There, that's nice. Your hands are so firm and strong with all their gentle taper; they're Winthrop hands, dear. There was always revolt against the overlord while there were Winthrop slim hands of steel, ever ready to slip into the hilt of a sword. You're heart-whole, aren't you, Beth? It isn't the giving up of a cherished ideal for something that will become ideal. I'm going to ask you something; you can answer or not, just as you wish, girl. Has meeting Mr. Baldwin changed you?"

"My feelings toward Rosemont are just as they were, mother. Why drag Baldwin's name into this?"

"Because——" Mrs. Holman hesitated, tapped Beth's hand affectionately, and added: "We'll eliminate Baldwin then."

"But '*because*,' mother—because of what?"

"Well, I think he's hardly worthy of you, Beth."

"Is that just an impression, mother, or a judgment founded on evidence? I ask quite impersonally."

"It's really my own impression, Beth."

"Well, I couldn't condemn anybody upon—I mean, that it's not fair to Mr. Baldwin. You see, mother, you really know nothing about him."

"Fortunately, I do—at least, others do. There's a Mr. Connors now in New York who knows Baldwin quite well in the West, and he has supplied some most distressing evidence of Baldwin's unworthiness. That's all I can say, Beth, but I know that it's quite true; it will all come out before long and then—no, don't ask me, I've given my word. As I was saying, worthiness is really the most important thing to consider; that peculiar erratic fancy that we call love often overrides every sane reason, but worthiness will outlast everything. That's why I've been so happy with your father. Extraordinary worth will win any woman's love if al-

ways before her eyes; and I know that Lord Rosemont is entirely deserving of any woman; his life is very clean. Of course this can't go on indefinitely, Beth. Lord Rosemont will have to have his answer some day, and I think I should feel his disappointment more than he would if you should refuse him. So will your father—he won't say anything, but he'll feel it."

Beth understood perfectly the covert forecast in her mother's anticipated grief; in fact, she knew that it was quite true, prophetic. Her mother had set her heart on this match; its failure would agitate her to an extraordinary degree; she lived on her nerves; buoyed up by a desire for achievement, her whole physical being responded to the call of the mind, she brightened to vivacity, to a fallacious semblance of health. This one great interest in her life removed, her ambition defeated, she would morbidly consume her attenuated life-force.

Beth had always bravely accepted this slavery, yielded to the dominating weakness; in her strength she had given way always. Though so delicately worded, she well knew that the reading of her mother's summing up of the father's precarious financial standing was meant as a warning that her refusal of Lord Rosemont's suit might mean his ruin.

"We've been very candid about it, mother dear, haven't we?" she said, after a long silence in which she had turned the kaleidoscope of her life a full circle; the colored bits of glass tumbling about in confusion.

"We are people of understanding," Mrs. Holman answered, "and marriage should be discussed before, and not after its consummation."

"And you very much wish me to marry Lord Rosemont, mother?"

"Because it would be for your happiness, daughter."

"And father wishes it, also?"

"It would make him very happy; it would relieve his mind, Beth."

"You've done a great deal for me, mother, and so has father."

"And Lord Rosemont will, if you'll permit him."

"Well, mother, you don't mind if I ask for a little time. I'd like to convince myself that I'm doing quite right. Suppose we just leave it in the hands of Lord Rosemont—and Fate."

"You mean that when he asks you to become Lady Rosemont you will?"

"Yes; if he, knowing that I do not love him, asks me to marry him, I will, for your sake and father's."

"And for your own sake."

"Perhaps I'm foolish; perhaps I magnify the sacrifice; perhaps he may change; God alone knows what may transpire, mother, but I promise."

Beth put her mother's thin hand gently back in her lap, kissed her playfully, and rising, said: "What a lugubrious pair we are. It's now up to Lord Rosemont—and Fate. I'm bound by seven seals unless he calls the bet off."

"Of course, if Lord Rosemont doesn't ask you to marry him you can't; you've given the only promise you could give, and you've made me very happy."

The girl stood silently for a moment pondering over this question of happiness. Was happiness always bought at the price of some one's misery? Perhaps she had promised something she could not give.

"Mother, I must qualify the compact by saying that I shall not encourage Lord Rosemont. I can't lie to the man in my acts; and if he withdraws his suit, then I shall be free—it would be foolish for me to deceive you as to my own inclination. Now I'm going out into the sunshine."

CHAPTER IV.

For a week after his serious talk with Mrs. Holman Lord Rosemont was a victim of indecision. In words he was generally positive—almost too close in cleavage to his convictions; but in argument with his introspection he was strangely vacillating—one moment quite buoyantly optimistic over Mrs. Holman's assurances, and the next pessimistically despondent, feeling somehow

that Beth would prove too much of a handful for her mother. It was all right for Mrs. Holman to talk about caste, but if Beth took a fancy to Baldwin, she was hardly the girl to throw him over for social attainment. She seemed to care so very little for pride of place or people. It was this very independence of the honor-rôle, now such a danger, that had attracted Rosemont in the first instance. Perhaps he had been too subtle in his wooing, had overreached himself in relying too confidently upon the mother's assured influence. Beth was a girl to be won by unusual method, a man must quite master her by unusual strength, either of character, or action or something. He had unusual position to offer, but why had he not enhanced this value by a stronger suggestion of his own personality. Certainly Baldwin seemed to be making strong running in this way.

Ordinarily a rich English nobleman might sit quiescent and graciously intimate that one of many ladies had found favor in his eyes, but Beth seemed to value the haloed shadow of a coronet less than the brightness of an illumined mind. Rosemont had not seen too much of the girl since she had so unnecessarily interested herself in the American horse that Baldwin was rounding into shape for the great International match. This was partly the girl's fault, but also partly due to Rosemont's class-distaste to too humiliating an abnegation. His pride would have held him more jauntily were the mother omnipotent to bring Beth to a condition of evident receptivity toward his understood suit.

Finally a more aggressive policy developed out of these reflections. In a sporting way it was certainly up to Beth herself to accept him or reject him; and Fate had curious methods of swaying these love-affairs. So often a case of wavering indecision on the girl's part when there was so much of advantage to weigh against just fancy; but if Rosemont were never on hand to receive Fate's favors—well, he would be on hand.

That very day this thought eventuated he motored, in sympathetic haste to his quick resolve, to Ninety-seventh Street. Beth was at home, and Rosemont, waiting for her appearance in the drawing-room, resolved, if he got half a chance, to increase his pace. Perhaps he even had nebulously in his mind the very throw of the dice that he made.

Paramountly the approaching steeplechase rose as topic after their greeting.

"Which horse are you going to start in the match, Lord Rosemont?" Beth asked.

"Haven't decided, Miss Beth. Parliamentarian is awfully clever at his jumps, but Sandstorm is rather higher class, don't you know."

"I thought you were to have nominated to-day—this is the first of October."

"Ah, we've changed that; name starters the day before the race, which must be between the fifteenth and twentieth. Not that it makes much difference—I shall win, whichever horse I start."

"You are confident, Lord Rosemont; such confidence is manifestly a battle half won, isn't it?"

"Well, Sandstorm ran third in the Great National. You can't very well get over class such as that represents. Magnificently bred, too, you know; Wisdom stock, great speed, all of them. Sandstorm's sire was Surefoot, and his dam was by Gallopin—and that *is* a great family. Surefoot was favorite for the Derby in his year, and would have won in a walk but for a slight infirmity of temper. He was going great guns coming down the hill to Tattenham Corner, but swinging into the stretch he stopped to savage another horse—that lost him the Derby. When he wanted to win, nothing in England could beat him; when he wanted to lose, no jockey in England could make him beat the rankest selling-plater. They should have put Surefoot over the jumps; there's something in that game that will turn the sourest temper sweet, man or beast. As you know, Miss Beth, huntsmen are corking good fellows, as a rule. If it hadn't been for just a little inherited kink in the temper, Sandstorm would have been a

Derby horse, too, so his class should make it almost a sure thing for him to beat any steeplechaser in America. Here they seem to take a horse that's not much account on the flat, and if he can scramble over a mud wall call him a steeplechaser."

"Still, if we could forecast the result of a race on breeding lines what would be the use of taking the horses out at all—why trouble to put them through the field?"

"By Jove! Can't see that, you know. How would you really have any sport at all?"

"Oh, I think it would be great fun; when men fell to boasting about their horses they might get down the stud-book, take a sheet of paper and figure the result out on pedigree lines. It would do away with all this crooked work in racing, wouldn't it?"

"Ah! Miss Beth, I'm catching on. You're chaffing. It's the regular thing here in America to jolly us Britishers about class and breeding. But you'll see, breeding will tell in this case. I wish I were as sure of some other things as I am of winning this race."

"Why, Lord Rosemont, I thought that you had no ambition ungratified except——"

"Except what, Miss Beth?"

"This present one of showing us Yankees the superiority of the English horse. I thought your heart was set on this great achievement to the entire obliteration of every other thought."

"You wrong yourself, indeed, Miss Beth——"

"And Sandstorm is really so very wonderful?" Beth interrupted quickly.

"I'd forgotten that Sandstorm lived." Beth laughed merrily.

"Just as I thought, Lord Rosemont. And when you are on his back you forget everything else. When you have won the steeplechase—*when* you have won it—why there won't be any other worlds to conquer, will there?"

"By Jove! You do love to torture, don't you, Miss Beth? That's a very ancient sport of flaying the captive alive, charmingly exhilarating."

"And Parliamentarian is also——"

"Pardon me, Miss Beth, I came very near consigning Parliamentarian to—— But why talk about the horses?"

"I thought you loved it."

"But there are gradations in loves. I wish you would let me talk about a greater matter than this horse-race, Miss Beth."

"Something that happened in England?"

The girl let her eyes wander to the Englishman's face in a quizzical, patient look of inquiry.

"No, by Jove! But to happen in America."

Beth's arrow of levity seemed to have missed the mark, it failed entirely in checking Rosemont's determined attack.

"Of course it's of England, though," he continued. He became suddenly aggressive. "Why won't you listen to me, Miss Beth? Why not say that you will come to England as my wife? Your mother, your father, both wish it."

"That would be a strong reason, Lord Rosemont, if——"

"If what, Miss Beth?"

The girl did not answer. Now, as before, she found it difficult to utter words that must cut, must wound, Rosemont was so evidently in earnest, for him so terribly in earnest. She did not love him, she had said it before; she knew absolutely just what answer he would return if she now said: "I don't love you sufficiently." He would say: "But you will learn to. In my life, with my people, you will grow more into my way, and a more steadfast love will come." Absorbed by this theme Rosemont improved; some suspicion of dramatic feeling warmed the monotonous casement of his ordinarily unmagnetic personality.

"I admit," Rosemont said presently, breaking a distressing silence that had settled over them, "that I'm just simply confined in my pleading to the iceberg of reason. What can I do, by Jove! At the slightest exhibition of feeling on my part you are ready to laugh. Indeed, I think it will pass into a prov-

erb in this land that Miss Holman reasons out everything."

"And I suppose all feeling, all sentiment really originates with reason; I mean, all that is not purely of the senses."

"By Jove! Exquisite! My point of view exactly. Let us reason ourselves into a state of *rapprochement;* there will be a felicitous progression."

"But how is one to reason about something that doesn't exist?"

"Ah, we'll conjure it. You know, Miss Beth, I fancy you resent my trying to enlist your mother's good services. Don't you know there are so many things that I—well, I hesitate to speak about? I want to help your father—got tremendous regard for him. You know the trouble he has—this mine business. I'm in it with the senator—well, just because he is being cheated. A desperado, backed by a man who should be more honorable, has jumped the mine. It's what they call a 'hold-up' in the West; but we now know who is the real culprit; and he's becoming alarmed—now offers half a million dollars to settle the lawsuit and get the mine."

"Then he is becoming fair in the deal, is he?"

"A rank swindle—it is worth five millions. Thorough scoundrel! The senator is absolutely distracted. But he hides much of this behind a seeming joviality—it's too bad! Beth, if you would only give me the right to act, with Earl Hawthorne's good office and the senator's past services, we could have your father appointed Minister to the Court of St. James."

Beth leaned over and touched Rosemont playfully on the hand with her fan, saying: "You are a born diplomat, envoy extraordinary to a recalcitrant maid. What an Alice-in-Wonderland business it is that you have conjured up—and all for poor little me, too. Father ambassador, mother ambassadress—is that right, Lord Rosemont? Would she really be all that? I'd be Lady Rosemont—but what about precedence? Mother would have to follow me into functions, wouldn't she? Mother wouldn't stand that. Oh, I'm sure we should make an awful affair of it. Such blunders, such humiliations; and not the usual recompense of the American girl's millions—we simply haven't got them, don't belong to that aristocracy of wealth we so advance as an offset against your aristocracy of ancestry."

Lord Rosemont relapsed into a gloomy puzzled silence. What was the use of argument? The more sane the argument the more provocative of frivolity. And there was nothing of coquetry about it, the girl simply didn't care. Rosemont couldn't understand the situation. What an array of desirables on his side; a title, wealth, himself—eagerly in earnest—swearing to his love for the girl; and nothing tangible on her side in the way of negation; not even another man—unless Baldwin; and yet Beth had been the same obstinate one before the other's appearance.

"What can I say, Miss Beth?" he pleaded petulantly. "It were almost better that you struck off my head at once. How are we ever to come to any understanding about it? You are almost willing for the sake of your parents' wishes to try for a better feeling, aren't you, Miss Beth—you said so, you promised?"

"Yes, I promised; but you promised to wait until I had."

"Yes, I know," Rosemont admitted despondently; "but if waiting breeds intense impatience, increases one's desire to the edge of unbearableness, one simply must speak; one can't eat one's heart out in silence, sitting like the Hindu in the sun waiting for the sunlight to open one's hands with its warmth. If I could do something to win you, outside of this inefficacious appeal to reason—you seem perfectly heart-whole, you can't plead a favored one. By Jove! One almost wishes he were back a hundred years for the tournament or something."

"I should like that," Beth cried eagerly. "I think the joust would appeal to me. Perhaps I was born to action. I love it. It might rouse my sentiment that seems atrophied."

"Yes, by Jove! Now all one can do is match a horse against the other fellow's, ride a race; even language now has its limitations, one must be undemonstrative. If I were imaginative enough to conceive that I were riding this steeplechase for you, for you, Miss Beth——"

"That's a splendid idea, Lord Rosemont—why not?"

This suddenly projected idea took Rosemont's breath—his eyes opened wide with an eager, startled look.

"Really! Do you mean that, Miss Beth? I've a notion to make you stick to that."

"A wager, do you mean?"

"A prize; to ride for the greatest prize in the world."

"For me?"

"Yes, if you will hold to your challenge."

"Ah, you are sure of winning. Is that fair?"

"There is nothing unfair in love."

"Let me hear the proposition, Lord Rosemont—the conditions of the race," Beth laughed.

"That if I win this steeplechase you end this tentative situation by making me the happiest man n the whole world."

"Ah, you'd be that if you won; that England had revenged itself upon America, wiped out Bunker Hill, would be an ecstasy."

Rosemont ignored this trivial side issue.

"Is it a compact, Miss Beth? By Jove! You mustn't back out—please don't. It's only an excuse, really, this hanging up as a priceless prize the happiness of your consent; just a little push of Fate shoving you gently over the line. Make it that, won't you? You will, won't you?"

In his eagerness Rosemont rose and, putting his hand on the girl's arm, looked into her face earnestly.

"Give me a tangible chance to pull you out of wavering—you *are* wavering, aren't you?"

"But if I'm the prize, does whoever wins the race get *me?*"

Rosemont's face clouded, only for an instant, then he said: "I sha'n't lose, I shall win."

"And if you win the steeplechase I am to become Lady Rosemont; and if you don't—what?"

Rosemont thought for a second before he answered: "I hardly know—I suppose I must simply give up, if you wish it. A man can't win, they say, where he has no chance to lose."

Beth laughed. There was a curious timbre to the merriment. "We are like a pair of children, aren't we, Lord Rosemont," she said, "making light of the serious."

"*You* were," Rosemont corrected.

"And now, taking so seriously this shadow of a structure."

"But it isn't a shadow," Rosemont objected. "I mean it—really, I mean it. It may seem quixotic, it may seem foolish, anything you like, Miss Beth, but I am going to hold you to it."

"You are really in earnest then—it is not just banter? You are willing to stake your chances on this steeplechase?"

"I am, I must. Anything that makes you consent to become Lady Rosemont is only the little twist of Fate that gives me chance to win you more certainly, more absolutely."

"Very well, Lord Rosemont, I suppose we are both what racing people call game—keeping our words over a wager whatever else may be shattered. If you win, then, when you come to me after and ask me to become your wife I shall feel myself bound to say yes; if you lose you will then explain to my mother that you have decided not to marry for the present."

"That's concise, Miss Beth."

"The conditions of a race always must be. You are going, Lord Rosemont? Very well."

"Might I ask for your good wishes?"

"England against America? Ah! I fear I'm too patriotic."

"I'd forgotten about America and England. I have just made a far greater match."

"Good-by, Lord Rosemont."

"Good-by, Miss Beth."

CHAPTER V.

"Made a match," Beth said softly, as she idly and in thoughtless destructiveness twisted the petals from an aster on the table; "matches are made in heaven, not on the steeplechase-course. But what have I done—what have I staked on the throw of a die? And we both play unfair, we play with loaded dice, for Patriarch is sure to win. What matters it? Rosemont said there was nothing unfair in love. But have I that excuse?" she asked the aster, picking another mauve petal, and rolling it like a cigarette.

She turned and smiled at the reflection of her face in the mirror, whispering: "Are you in love? Just tired. Come, confess, Rosemont tires you. That's what men are for, to grow tiresome, I suppose. And this fluffy-cushioned lounge is for surcease from tiredness. I'll lay me down to—not at home."

Beth touched a bell. "Bring tea, Drake," she said when the butler entered.

"A card—when one hopes for tea. Not at home, Drake," Beth said as she took the card from the butler; then she read Baldwin's name. "Why, I am at home, Drake—show the gentleman in here.

"I'm not tired now," she whispered to the cushions; "the very thought of tea has done its work."

"I'm glad I caught you at home, Miss Holman," Baldwin said as he entered.

"I thought you were going to gallop Patriarch this afternoon, Mr. Baldwin. I believe that just in that lies the difference between the professional and the amateur, the pro must work and will, the amateur need not and won't. And, if you are out of training, I suppose two lumps of sugar, is it?"

"I'm in despair."

"Well, please don't look the part; I'm blue myself. See how I smile and smile, cheating myself out of the happiest mood in the world, abject morbid misery."

"Ah, but your trouble, whatever it is, has to do with men and women—they come and go and it doesn't matter much, but mine is over a horse, such a one as comes just once in a lifetime. By Jove! Just in time to catch it, wasn't I. I think the china was so filmy it hung in air or I should have missed it."

"Pardon me, something has slacked my nerves. One's nerves should be like the horsehair in a fiddle-bow; resin, and the slack tension would make no difference. Now that we're in a metaphysical mood, introspectively independent of everything outside of ourselves, what about Patriarch—broken a leg, coughing? Tell me all at once so that the shock will dull my misery."

"Lame!"

The girl set her even teeth, and for a second she searched in the little silver bowl for a lump of sugar the exact size. "Very lame, Mr. Baldwin—out of it?"

"Yes, very lame."

The girl chased a string of bubble pearls around the circle of her cup with a little souvenir spoon, and as they burst and came to nothing she likened them to the useless finesse of her compact with Rosemont.

Suddenly a suspicion entered her mind that he, perhaps, knew of Patriarch's collapse. She had rather wondered at his willingness to stake so readily so much upon the never certainty of a race.

"Does Lord Rosemont know of Patriarch?" she asked presently, grading with huge effort her voice to steadiness.

"Can't say."

"Was he at the course to-day?"

"He was galloping Sandstorm."

"Then he probably knows. How did it happen?"

"I—well, we are trying to find out."

"I don't understand. Oh, he hurt himself in his stall at night, is it, and you don't know how it happened."

"Well, we know what happened, but still——" Baldwin hesitated.

Something of evasiveness in his answer struck the girl as odd; his face now carried a moody, perplexed look; his eyes accentuated the evasiveness of his explanations or lack of them.

"But what?" she asked half imperi-

ously. "Is there some hidden mystery about it?"

"Yes; it is unpleasant to think even of how much lower than animals some men are, and much less pleasant to discuss it."

"But I want to know—I have reasons."

"That's just it. You see suspicion might be directed toward—well, naturally one looks for an enemy in the enemy's camp; but this is too horrible to believe of any man of even ordinary training."

Beth laid her fan with strong pressure upon Baldwin's hand, saying impressively: "Now, tell me just what it is, please."

"If you insist I will, though I'd rather not. Patriarch went lame before I'd galloped half a mile this morning. Oh, but he's game! How brave a brave horse is. He fought against it; I think that's what caused the serious trouble. You know I gallop him in bandages just to save his shins over the jumps, and when my trainer stripped the bandages and ran his hand down the back tendon to see if it was bowed he found a fine wire tightly bound. Heavens! It was awful! God help me, I would have killed the man that put it on if I could have laid hand on him. Isn't humanity an awful thing when it's inhuman?"

"The noblest, meanest work of God! But what does the vet say about Patriarch now?"

"Nothing—he's glum in negation. I know it's hopeless."

"It's horrible! You have no clue?"

"None. You see, I haven't been here long. I have no enemies. The only point of difference with any one is simply this purely sporting match with Lord Rosemont, and one couldn't attribute this cowardly act to him."

"I wonder if he really knows about it."

"Well, he was at the course, and his trainer knew that Patriarch was lame, for he saw him. Nobody but my trainer and myself knew about the wire—except the beast who put it on."

"Rosemont was here half an hour ago, but he didn't say anything about Patriarch's lameness."

"Englishmen are diffident; perhaps he hesitated to speak of it for fear of showing some elation."

"Perhaps," Beth answered laconically. "You'll have to depend upon Hidalgo. How is he going?"

"He won't do, I fear. He has taken to sulking over Patriarch's beating him when we've tried them together. I shall have to start him and get hopelessly beaten, I suppose; I can't get another horse of any class. There are two horses in training that might have a chance with Sandstorm—Achilles and Hydra—but they are owned by millionaires who race for the love of beating each other; neither of these horses could be bought at any price. There now, Miss Beth, I've contributed to the séance of dolefulness—I'm all in, haven't another horror to present. It's your turn. Why were you so ecstatically unhappy?"

"Well, I'm going to tell you, because —well, something has got to be done. It's some of father's business—mines."

"There are lame ducks among them, too."

"And crooked trainers, also; that's the trouble in father's case. Do you know of a mine called the Lone Ledge?"

Baldwin started, shot a quick glance at the girl, and answered hesitatingly: "I think I have heard of it."

This tentative answer reassured him, for the girl's face suffered no change as she answered: "Well, father owns that—it belongs to him, but some scoundrel has put a man up to claim the mine. Father bought it from the men who really discovered it. Now the whole thing is in the courts."

"A bad location for a mine, the courts —and Nevada is almost as bad, for these mines are somewhat mixed as to ownership. And, perhaps, after all, the other man may not be an absolute villain; he may think he has a right to the mine, Miss Holman."

"Oh, he doesn't, because now that it's coming near the trial of the suit he has

offered father half a million dollars to settle."

"Well, that shows that he is not absolutely heartless, doesn't it?"

"It proves his villainy; the mine is worth five millions."

"I'll go out to Nevada and shoot the man. What's his name?" Baldwin leaned forward in an assumption of smiling eagerness.

"I don't know. He seems to hide behind the man whom he has put up to this wretched business. I'm afraid father knows very little about mines, and I am sure Lord Rosemont knows less. I thought you might know the Western methods better, and might help father frustrate this villainy."

"And you want very much to get it settled, do you, Miss Holman? Why not let the courts settle it? Then whoever really owns the property will get it."

"That takes so long. The worry is dreadful for father—for all of us."

"How does Lord Rosemont take it?"

"Like an Englishman."

"Ah—I have a limited experience. How does an Englishman take such matters?"

"I hardly know how to explain; perhaps that the goods that are Cæsar's always come to Cæsar."

"Doesn't seem to care, you mean? Now if you'll answer candidly a miserably impertinent question, Miss Holman, I'll promise that I can be of service to you in this matter."

"You wouldn't know how to ask an impertinent question. I'll promise to answer before I hear it."

"Does your happiness depend upon this mine dispute?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. Now attention for the impertinence. Is it in connection with Lord Rosemont?"

"Yes."

Baldwin essayed to speak, hesitated as though the words gave him pain. "Then, if the senator's affairs were arranged satisfactorily you would become Lady Rosemont?"

The girl did not answer at once. With nervous fingers she adjusted the asters in the vase, and Baldwin waited. He walked to the window and back; he stood beside the girl and his voice was full of penitence as he said: "I shouldn't have asked that question. Some elemental crudeness floated to the top, stirred by feeling. I only wanted to know so that I might perhaps help. I'll tell you why—I must—it is better; we'll understand each other. I'm the villain in the play."

"*You*—are *what?*"

"I, Javvers Baldwin, am the other claimant to the Lone Ledge. I did not know that your father was the man I was fighting, but I did know that I should beat the man I was fighting because a truly villain had sold him something he had no right to. The senator, being innocent, not knowing the true facts, fought the matter; but he has no chance to win. He was just the victim of an unscrupulous scoundrel who got a great deal of money out of him under false representations."

"Then why did you offer half a million dollars to a man who had no claim on the property?"

"I—I—wished to have it settled; it would have dragged through the courts."

"That was not your reason; you like to fight—the exhilaration of combat pleases you; you said once it was your form of amusement. You had your other mine—you could have waited the court's delay over this one. When you made this offer did you know it was my father that was against you?"

"Yes."

"Then tell me why you offered half a million dollars for a property worth five millions?"

"It isn't worth five millions; it is probably not worth very much more than the sum I offered."

"Tell me, please. My head throbs with all this mystery and trouble; I must know, I don't want to think of you as—— Won't you tell me?" She put her hand on the man's arm; her touch thrilled him with its intensity.

"I thought this stood between you and your marriage with Lord Rosemont. I thought that it would make

you happy. It did not seem much because I did not need it—it was no more than giving an orange to a child."

"And while you were doing this for my sake I was calling you a villain. But it was all a mistake. I wanted father to get the money from this mine to become independent of Lord Rosemont."

"I suppose we are given understanding for the express purpose of solving the thousand and one things that seem past all understanding. Life should be symbolized by a great query mark; we wake in the morning and the first thought is why? It may be a missing cup of tea; one's valet locked up overnight and not yet bailed. And then we shake hands all day long with an Indian file of round-shouldered query marks?"

"Apropos of what?"

"Of the present 'whys.' Why did not your father accept my offer if it would have cleared the atmosphere?"

"Perhaps Rosemont advised him not to until——" The girl adjusted the folds of her skirt.

"Until what—until you had made treaty?"

"Perhaps. For it seems that strategy governs the contest; and I am very much afraid that his lordship is just a little bit cleverer than I gave him credit for."

"You surprise me."

"He has surprised me. I wonder if you'll be shocked if I tell you what I've done."

"Nothing that you have done will shock me, Miss Holman."

"Exquisite!"

"No, I didn't mean that way! I meant that you couldn't do anything that would shock me—you wouldn't."

"Oh, I might as well tell you. Was it the walrus that said to the sailor, 'This is the time to talk about many things?' To-day Lord Rosemont felt very sure of winning the match."

"Naturally!" Baldwin finished with a sigh of regret.

"I thought that he was oversanguine."

"I should have thought so yesterday, but to-day he seems to have a sure thing."

"I hardly know how it came about, but he—well, he wanted to increase the stakes."

"Great Scott! That was a marked-card game! You didn't make a wager with him, did you?"

"Yes."

"Not much, I hope. Why, the bet is off. He couldn't have been in earnest about it, must have been chaff. Was it a big bet?"

"No, just a trifle. The bet is fair enough, because I thought he would lose; I knew it was a good thing for Patriarch to beat Sandstorm. And if he did, well, I should escape certain—I can't explain it, Mr. Baldwin, it was just a freak bet such as people make at election-time."

"May I try to guess the riddle? You won't be angry? Was it similar to the settlement of the mine, destined to lessen Rosemont's tithe?"

"It was just foolish."

"It wasn't foolish. I think it was a plucky throw of the dice, wasn't it?"

"It's foolish now, anyway, for he'll win."

Baldwin took a quick turn up and down the room. He stopped near the girl and half playfully said: "'My kingdom for a horse!' I wanted to win before for the sake of America, but what shall I say of now? But he can't hold you to the wager; he must have known that Patriarch was out of it."

"Perhaps he didn't; we can't prove it, anyway. I was playing just as unfairly, for Patriarch would have won. I was as guilty as he, for I thought I was betting on a sure thing, as racing men say."

"But what of this man who comes and has a wager like this with a woman—— By Heaven! It gives me a suspicion that he has something to do with laming my horse; the stakes are big now, I——"

"Please don't—you can't really think of Lord Rosemont as doing that? He is—well, he's odd, but he wouldn't do such a foolish, inhuman thing. I

don't like you in that mood—it's like—who is Cayuse Connors?"

Baldwin stared in amazement at the questioner. "Why do you ask? What do you know of this man?"

At Baldwin's question, almost sternly abrupt, the girl cast her eyes down in a pained humiliation. "Something was said about—about—but why keep anything back? We flounder from one slough of misery and suspicion to another—about you and a mine. I don't know what it was. I didn't want to know; I suppose now that it was over the Lone Ledge; it was this man Connors who told Lord Rosemont."

"Cayuse Connors is here then; now I know who lamed Patriarch."

"You don't think Rosemont had anything to do with the inception of this monstrous crime?"

"No, there's no man in America sufficiently qualified in villainy to invent crimes for Connors; and there is no rascality in America too vile for his doing. You ask who he is—he's the man I was supposed to have killed but I didn't unfortunately—I only hurt him, and now he hates me with a fierce revengeful hate. He has come to know of this match, and has bribed some colored stable-boy to put that wire on Patriarch's leg."

"I'm glad you don't think Lord Rosemont had anything to do with it."

"But he must have known the horse was lame, and took a caddish advantage of that knowledge. Do you know what I'll do, Miss Holman? I'll start Hidalgo. He's fast for half a mile, and I'll bring Rosemont down at the first jump. The stewards may award him the money, but if he doesn't win your bet is off."

"Rosemont said all's fair in——" The girl broke off in confusion. She appealed to the asters to hide the hot flush that suffused her face.

"In love and war, eh? By Jove! He's playing the game that way, too, isn't he?"

Beth must have pushed the vase, for it reeled and would have toppled but for Baldwin's grasp at its slender plinth. Beth, too, startled, had clutched wildly at the vase. Her fingers fell upon Baldwin's hand; the touch sent the blood rioting through his veins; his whole frame surged in a mad carnival of mastering passion.

"Is it that?" he cried. "Is it love and war? And may I, too, fight?" Unrebuked, he gathered courage. "Tell me, Beth, to break a spear in this joust, give me a glove—let me have it. Why not? You are not the girl to care for a title. Why go among strangers? Why live in England? Unless, of course, for love. If you love Lord Rosemont then forgive me for speaking of the other, but if you don't, if you can let me love you—— Beth, see, as we love flowers, as we love beautiful, God-created things, I love you; and I can clear up everything else, everything. Won't you speak, just some word that will tell me that I am not mad, that I am not false to our friendship, that I have not broken in like a burglar upon your other trouble?"

"You are not mad, not a burglar; you are just——"

"What, Beth?"

"I don't know, you're a man." She gave a little tired smile and added: "You're a man who has come just a little too late."

"It's never too late in some things."

"I don't know. To-day I thought I saw a way of pleasing myself—of gaining mother's acceptance of the inevitable. It was a gambling throw of the dice—foolish, and I thought it so clever."

"But it seems such a mockery to hazard happiness, for you to sacrifice yourself even for your parents. I know it is done here in America. Our girls marry titled foreigners because their families are blinded by the glamour of aristocratic caste."

"There was more than that in my case. Father's peace of mind seemed to depend upon my doing my part; before—up to within a few months—I think I did not care. Rosemont was as agreeable to me as any other man; my mother thought that I should be happy. I think I should have been so; I like people of high caste. I'm afraid I en-

couraged Lord Rosemont; I think he was led to believe that I would some day marry him. I'm afraid mother was overoptimistic. To-day I thought it was Fate throwing my way a straw upon which to swim ashore. One can't break away from all these things just for one's own self; one can't lose a bet and refuse to pay. There are some silly old sayings about dying game, and all that, you know. They are really better for the human race than just being the creatures of feeling, of impetuous fancy."

"You mean that if Rosemont wins the race and holds you to your foolish compact that you will accept him as your husband?" Baldwin spoke these matter-of-fact words with doubting voice, as though he expected the girl to break into disclaiming.

But she answered: "Yes. Rosemont holds my father a heavy debtor. I know that this has been because of me; I've been weak; I should have—I did try to tell him that I did not love him; but I would have married him, I loved no other man; there was no way in honor but that he should withdraw his suit. That is why I took this silly chance that seemed to offer to-day as though Fate held it out to me in the hollow of his hand. And now, Javvers"—the girl stood behind a heavy chair with her hands upon the back of it—"if I lose I lose, and if I win——"

"Why talk of winning?" Baldwin's voice rasped with despair. "That scoundrel knew that Patriarch was lame!"

"If he did, all's fair in love and war, isn't it?"

"I swear he'll never get the course."

"Here, sit down, Javvers. We must arrange to let Lord Rosemont get the course——"

"Never!"

"And lose."

"Hidalgo can't beat Sandstorm. He could if he would, but to risk a life's happiness on a horse that one wouldn't bet a dollar on—no!"

"Is it true that the date for nominating the horse to start has been postponed?"

"Yes, about two weeks; Lord Rosemont asked that yesterday—more of his trickery. He had two good ones, and if anything went wrong with Sandstorm he could start the other."

"Bless his supercunning. You don't have to start either Patriarch or Hidalgo, do you? Not if you have a better horse, I mean!"

"No; but where am I to get a steeplechaser now?"

"I know of one," Beth answered quietly.

Baldwin sprang to his feet, galvanized momentarily out of his despair by this prospect of a fighting chance.

"Where—who owns him? I'll pay any price! I'll establish a record for the price of a horse!" In his excitement he paced up and down as if oblivious of the drawing-room habitat. "Forgive me," he said presently, catching Beth's eye, and sinking into his chair. "See what a little rift in the clouds does. Now, who owns this horse, Miss Beth?"

"I do."

Baldwin stared in amazement. "The big bay with the winged feet?"

Beth nodded. "His name is not Mercury, but Heros. That's because his stout heart counts for more than the winged feet. He belonged to my brother Frank. He would have made the greatest steeplechaser in America, but one day he fell—I can't talk about that part of it, don't ask me. I have ridden Heros to hounds when they ran, and to my nerves when they ached; he's had plenty of work." Beth's voice harshed in a bitter note. "Yes, Heros is as hard as nails; and he's the bravest, truest horse that ever answered to his rider's call."

There was a magnetic quality about the girl's deep loving faith in the horse that was compelling. Under its thrall Baldwin found that he was again pacing the floor.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, with a plaintive smile. "The wonder is that I don't vault this center-table under the impression that it's the water-jump. I *am* excited. I came in here simply dragging my feet reluctantly—they

were great leaden things like divers' boots; but now—— By Jove! Bravery, the smiling courage, is contagious."

"As I was saying"—Beth's tone was that of one who reconstructs the problem for a pupil—"Heros is in good condition."

Baldwin smiled apologetically. "I'll try to be sensible," he said. "In the first place, then, will you sell Heros to me?"

"No."

Baldwin's face suggested in its expression that indeed something had recalled him very suddenly to his senses. "I see," he said, "I dine on mustard."

"You might buy Heros from father," Beth continued. "You see, I must be perfectly neutral."

Baldwin's face cleared. "But your father will hardly sell me a horse with which to beat Lord Rosemont, I fear."

"Father is the most patriotic American that ever lived; he would commit hara-kiri to-morrow if you would promise to bury him on Bunker Hill. And when it comes to an affair between England and America, individual friends and enemies will loom very small. You get Roland Plowden to negotiate the purchase of Heros from father."

"You want me to win then, Beth?"

"I want America to win."

"A national sentiment of great credit to your patriotism, Miss Beth. But in a small-parish way, speaking as a private citizen, and having a great regard for my own happiness, if Lord Rosemont loses his wagers, do I win them?"

Beth smiled, purely out of physical strength. "Lord Rosemont's wager is with me—how can *you* win by his loss?"

"And yet you spoke of neutrality."

"I see. You want the same wager in fairness."

"Yes."

"Well, let me see. You win if Rosemont loses——"

"All he loses?"

"All."

Baldwin took a step toward the girl, his hands outstretched; but she twisted a chair between them, saying: "Until you've won—because if you lose you lose that which you never had; and if you win you win not something already won."

"Don't you think there's such a thing as preserving too strict a neutrality, Miss Beth?"

"Neutrality varied must cease to exist. I fancy, being a noun it hasn't the elasticity of a verb. And Heros——"

"By Jove! Yes; thanks."

Beth smiled, and holding out her hand, said: "You get Roland started as a buyer, and perhaps some little bird will whisper in father's ear to be patriotic. Good-by now."

"Good-by, Beth. Don't let Lord Rosemont call the bet off, will you?"

"All bets stand. It's play or pay."

As the door shut out the virility of Baldwin's reconstructed optimism, Beth sank into a chair, gliding into a mood of dejection.

A gamble! What a subject for reproach was a man who staked his last dollar on a roll of the dice, while she had alone this gambling chance for happiness. Presently the heavy clang of the elevator door roused her from the depressed mood. She rose and looked out into the hall.

"Come in here, dad," she called, as the senator stood for a second, thrusting his latch-key into his pocket.

"Well," Senator Holman began as Beth closed the drawing-room door behind him, "how much does it cost? It doesn't make any difference, girl; I haven't got any money, so you're wasting your time."

"It isn't a case of ransom, dad; I don't want anything. Have you heard that Baldwin's best horse, Patriarch, has gone wrong, and that we sha'n't have the patriotic pleasure of beating the Johnnie Bull horse?"

"And the Dutch have taken Holland, Beth."

"You knew about Patriarch, then—you heard it?"

"Yes; Rosey and Major Hicks-Swithen and that honorable skyrocket, young Hawtry, were carving it down at the club as though they had a sirloin of beef."

"I suppose Lord Rosemont is well pleased; he'll have a walkover now."

"By jinks! Pretended to be awfully disappointed—wanted to give the other chap a run for his money, he assured the major."

"So like Rosey—full of generous sentiment," Beth commented.

"Flap-doodle!" the senator growled. "The three Britishers were so devilish patronizing over the Yankee horse's going wrong—that's what they called him, Beth, the Yankee horse. By jinks! If I'd been a racing man and had a good horse I'd have taken a bluff at them right there."

"I'll sell you Heros, dad—he can beat Sandstorm; you go and make a match with him."

"Owners up, eh? Two hundred and twenty pounds. Rosey'd have to wear his coronet and family armor. Better sell him to the man who's got the match on with Rosemont now. I should breathe easier, girl, if you did get rid of Heros."

"I couldn't sell Heros to Mr. Baldwin, father, without creating comment."

"I hardly see that, girl; you have a right to sell the horse to whom you please."

"Quite true, father; but I haven't the power to control comment. You might sell him. Baldwin is moving heaven and earth to get something as good as Patriarch."

"Rosemont would be down on me like a shot if I butted in like that."

"This isn't a question of individuals, dad—of Rosemont or Baldwin; it's England against America; it's international. Lord Rosemont has brought the best horse he could find in England, and he's matched against an American horse; that's the idea—an American horse; names or individual feelings, as you would say, cut no ice. In fact, it's 'Remember the *Maine*,' dad."

"What's that got to do with it, girl?"

"Didn't some scoundrel lame Patriarch—put a wire around his leg in the stall!"

"By jinks! Is that true? I didn't hear that. I understood he came down at a jump."

"It's quite true, dad."

"But they can't think Rosemont had anything to do with it?"

"No; it's not likely he had. But no American would want to lame the American horse, would he. And we've just got to be patriotic enough to let Heros fight this battle for America. Now, if they want to buy Heros to take Patriarch's place you'll sell him for me, won't you? Come now, dad, I want to get rid of Heros; I'm afraid of him, really."

Beth caught the senator's mustache in her finger and thumb, and pulling his face around smiled quizzically. "'Remember the *Maine*,' dad. I don't want the British horse to win over America. We'll take Lord Rosemont at his word and help him give the other fellow a run for his money. Promise now, dad, before I pull harder."

"Oh, I'll sell him—I'd sell him to a Hottentot. I've been shivering in my boots for fear he'd give you a fall."

Beth kissed her father, and somehow the touch of her lips seemed to suddenly stir a startling thought in his mind; he looked at the girl with a glance of half-suspicion. "Say, Beth, you seem tremendously interested in this Baldwin's getting a horse. Is it purely patriotic or—or——"

"It's purely Anti-British, dad."

"I don't quite understand."

"Nobody does when they use that phrase. I'm running away to dress now; think it over, dad."

"Nobody understands a woman—I guess that's the real thing," the senator commented, as Beth's skirts drew a fine attenuated note of whispering laughter all down the echoing hall.

CHAPTER VI.

Beyond the Belmont race-track there is a large field containing four jumps for the schooling of steeplechasers; and one afternoon Beth stood in this field watching Baldwin put Heros, whom he had bought, over these jumps.

Her heart thrilled as she saw the big bay swing over the turf in his mighty stride, even and smooth in his gallop,

like the rhythmic lift and fall of a deer bounding across a plain in pure exultation of movement.

Then at the first jump the horse straightened his lean neck and pricked his ears; the mighty muscles rippled into relief as they gathered for the lift; the bronze body lengthened out like the uncoil of a steel spring, and horse and rider swooped through the air. There was a musical click as the close-gathered hoofs came together; then again the thunderous pound on the turf as the blooded horse, eager of achievement, raced at the next brush-topped panel of rails.

The girl's lips, parted in eager intensity, whispered in exultant joy: "Beautiful! Beautiful! Heros, brave, true-hearted old Heros!"

She was quivering with intense sympathy, with premonition of happiness that was to come through the stanch fidelity of her horse and the man, who, cool and calm of hand, rode with a sinuous yielding to every move of the big bay.

Again Heros rose at the railed barrier, and his powerful hoofs swept through the brush as though the horse jumped with a fine discrimination that wasted nothing of strength in clearing the rails.

Four times the bay lifted in his strong gallop, and each time the same clean, unwasteful jump. Now he was checked at the spot where the girl stood, and Baldwin, smiling, slipped from the saddle, and stood with an arm over the horse's neck, saying: "I think the greatest blessings always come disguised as afflictions. When Patriarch went lame three days ago I was blue enough to souse myself in the river or something, but now—look at him, Miss Beth; did you see him jump? Was there ever such a horse in the world?"

The girl pulled the mouse-colored muzzle to her cheek, and as the horse's sensitive lip vibrated and snuggled her face she kissed him.

Baldwin's voice, soft modulated to banter, caused the girl to turn toward him a face that held conflict between a blush and a frown. "One would think he had cleared the Hellespont. I'll bet I can take those jumps myself; they're nothing but a sheep-run. By Jove! I'll do it if you'll——"

The frown became positive, checking Baldwin here. Then the girl laughed and asked: "If I'll what?"

"Hold the stakes till I come back."

"You have taken the four jumps with Heros."

"Do I win? And what do I get?"

"Tea—over at the Club-House."

"Well, I suppose it's only fair—he does all the work. It's good to be a horse, though, at times."

"Heros is a hero; and I never saw him jump so well in my life."

"Isn't he in grand shape? Look at those quarters."

A colored boy was leading Heros back to the stables, and at each long springy step the muscles of his thighs mapped themselves beneath the silken skin like the ripple of water.

Beth watched Heros half across the field before she answered: "Yes. He should have one of those Oriental names like 'Rampresad,' the Gift of God."

"You mean," Baldwin queried, "that the powers are pleased with Heros, or are in complicity with us to defeat the Britisher?"

"Yes," the girl answered ambiguously. "Shall we walk across the infield to the Club-House? Roland Plowden promised to pick me up there."

They dipped under the outer rail of the main track of the race-course, and stood for a second looking down its wide boulevardlike stretch of colored earth.

"I often wonder," Baldwin said, "when I cross this bit of track, how many races are won or lost just here on this back-stretch. I mean how many little compacts are made. Two boys galloping out here in front might easily pass the word that a friendly plunger had a killing framed up. Yonder, across the field, is the huge stand that on race-day will hold thousands of people, absolutely dependent upon the twist of a wrist here where we stand, upon the unwise flick of a whip or the jab of a spur. By Heavens!

Contemplative, reflective, large in our wisdom, all through life we really hang upon the most casual spin of an inanimate die."

Unconsciously as he spoke Baldwin had led the way under the inner rail to the steeplechase-course, just where the huge Liverpool rose in a mound like the grave of a giant across its grassed surface. The girl stopped and looked at the object with a tremor of apprehension.

"I had no idea a jump could be so formidable!" she gasped.

"Yes, it's no joke to a tired horse, this Liverpool," Baldwin answered. "See"—he paced off the width of the jump—"the well is nearly nine feet at the base; there is the ditch in front; brush and all, it is quite five feet of a shoot into the air. A horse will hardly do it under eighteen or twenty feet from hoof-mark to hoof-mark. You see this white pole on top of the mud wall with its iron straps to hold it down—I expect that caught poor old Cobalt the day he broke his back."

"It is a vicious-looking thing!" the girl exclaimed.

"It's brutal. Woe betide the horse that shoulders that! Last year, they tell me, a horse struck it full with the point of his shoulder and lit fair on his croup ten feet beyond."

"Have you put Heros over this?"

"Yes; and I'll tell you something, Miss Beth—he's got a brain like a chess-player and a heart like a lion. Just stand and look down the full sweep of this huge oval course—about a mile and a half around it is—doesn't it make you tired, the very distance, it seems so far around? Well, that's just what it does to horses; and when they come to this Liverpool some of them haven't the pluck to go at it strong, and they come a cropper. Yesterday morning I rode Heros the full course, and coming up the back here I thought he was a bit leg-weary, but the old boy was just nursing himself a little for this coffin-box. There, three posts down the course, I could feel the beginning of his rush, and like a trained athlete he swung himself with just a touch of a helping swerve and we were over clean as a whistle."

"Yes, that's Heros' way. At hounds it was the same; the bigger the jump the greater care to take it clean."

"And that's how we'll beat Sandstorm, Miss Beth. I saw the English horse take this Liverpool the same morning. He came at it brave enough but seemed to hesitate for the quarter of a second, as much as to say: 'Now see the jump;' and when he landed—safe enough, I may say—I thought he was going to stop to fan himself."

"Do you like tea?" the girl suggested.

"By Jove! Pardon me, I forgot. You'll be late for Plowden."

"That won't matter. He can wait. One can't wait for tea when one's mind is on it."

The huge stand, empty, was possessed of an oppressive silence as the two came out of the infield and passed down a roadway by the line of stablings to the Turf and Field Club-house that nestled in a jungle of elm, and oak, and cedar, and spruce. It was a quaint old-fashioned building, like a miniature block-house, and had at one time been the manor-house of the owner of all this property.

"There's something wondrous medieval about this," Baldwin said as they passed between the huge square posts with their iron gates. "Just for the exquisite pleasure of it I am now Baron Wolfrung and this is my castle, to be honored by a visit from the Princess Flavia."

"She was in a book, while I am in a quandary, for there is no sign of Roland and his car."

"And Baron Wolfrung was nowhere that I remember of; but it's fairly easy to make up those German princelings. Shall we go through to the veranda? There's a gaudy red and white Titanic umbrella there that we can sit beneath and have our tea."

They took chairs at a little table, and the club steward, with a soft, noiseless step, quite in keeping with the silence of the trees, brought them a dainty service of tea and bread and butter.

"It is a castle, don't you think?" Baldwin said. "Beyond the somber green of those cedars there are no race-horses, never clamorous yellers of odds, and farther still away to the west there is no huge city."

"And presently we'll hear the chuck-chuck of Roland's car."

"Do you see that decrepit patriarch?" Baldwin questioned, pointing to a limbless trunk, huge and rough of bark that stood like a monument of decay among the evergreens.

"I've seen nothing else since I sat down," Beth answered. "It chills me; it suggests the mutability of everything. It's like those remorseful-looking trees that Doré painted."

"See the odd little opening in the crotch. I dare say a squirrel homes within that doorway. It brings back to my mind Willard and his 'Professor's Love Story.' Don't you remember how the professor's sister dropped the note that meant so much of happiness in just such a woodland post-box, and by some mischance the silly lover missed the mail and disappeared?"

"Again the omnipotence of chance; and the squirrel is really more rational, for he knows exactly where to find his treasure."

"But if lightning were to strike that stub the squirrel's wisdom would be as inefficacious—as useless as mine will, if Heros hits that white pole on the Liverpool next week."

"Why don't you first put the sugar in your tea and stir it afterward?"

"I was making a little hole for the sugar."

They both laughed. Suddenly Baldwin's merriment ceased, and he held himself in a listening attitude.

"What is it?" the girl asked.

"I fancied I heard the honk of a 'mobile. I was afraid it was Plowden. Ah! Listen! Not much like the brass throat of a motor-horn, is it?"

Filtering through the evergreens came the mellow voice of a darky singing over at the training-stables.

"I'se gwine wait for de coppah moon,
Foh old lub's young by de coppah moon."

Then a heavy bass joined issue with the soft tenor, rolling the words up in a muffled ball; sonorous of music but unintelligible. There came the sharp bang of an iron-shod hoof against stable-planking, and the bass voice switched to the business in hand, and certain imprecations.

"Whoa, you English debbil! You jus' a fool-headed Johnnie Bull!"

Baldwin laughed. "The darky rubber is having his own time with Sandstorm; he's got a devilish temper, they say—the horse, I mean. He is stabled just behind the trees there, in No. 3."

The tenor voice came again floating lazily on the summer air:

"When de cotton-field am sleeping,
Neath de moon, de coppah moon;
I see de goblin go creeping,
In de blood-red light ob de moon.
Hush-a-ee, my baby! Hush-a-ee, my coon!
Foh de goblin he go cotch you—
He snatch you up to de moon!"

Then the booming bass smothered the refrain again, obliterating everything but the copper moon which came out persistently.

"Like vaudeville," Baldwin laughed. "He runs the gamut of human existence by the light of the copper moon. But what atmosphere! If one could sit here in quietude forever——"

"One, or two?"

"A collective noun, one. What do you say, Miss Beth? If the bubble-fiend doesn't turn up let's stay and have dinner. How's your courage? Dare you do it?"

"I can't help myself, if Roland doesn't come. There's the trolley line, but I haven't a nickel in my pocket."

"I'm broke, absolutely."

The girl looked at Baldwin with doubting reproach in her eyes and asked: "How are you to get back to New York, please?"

"I've a return ticket from Queens, and that's only a short walk. However, our poverty is not going to benefit us. Plowden is sure to come if we only make arrangements to have dinner, so I think we had better do it."

The sun had dipped behind the wall of trees, that, with their varied foliage

of yellow and rye-green and deep emerald, was like a great tapestry hung by invisible wires against the mellow gold of the sky.

The spirit of the gentle seclusion fell upon Baldwin and Beth, and they sat silent for a long time. Presently he broke the stillness, saying: "Isn't it good to let the muscles of one's mind relax absolutely, to allow one's thoughts to wander uncontrolled like children at play in the sand, finding pleasure in a pink shell, stubbing one's toe against the jagged points of some half-forgotten rock till one almost cries out in pain?"

"Did you find a sunken rock just now? I could have sworn I heard you sigh?"

"Shall I tell you what hurt, what tripped me as I ran swiftly along the smooth sand of reflection?"

"Yes—no; better not. There's always plenty of the unpleasant before us. Wise writing that, 'Let the dead past bury its dead;' it is absolution without the humiliation of confession."

"You shy at the jump, Miss Beth, eh? The remembrance of that huge Liverpool is still in your mind."

"I wasn't thinking of it."

"I was. It isn't good to wager too heavily on a race; the unexpected happens the more readily, it seems, and its hurt is stunning."

"I suppose one can always call off a bet before the event."

"I can't; I'm playing Rosemont, heads he loses tails I win; for I should lose, anyway, if the wager weren't on —— Hello! There's the black nightingale again."

The soft darky voice carried to their ears, singing:

"Tell her dat you lub her,
Neat' de moon—de coppah moon;
When de goblin's not a list'nin';
In de blood-red light ob de moon.
An' softly, my lub, softly an' low,
Tell her dat you lub her 'fore you let her go,
Foh de goblin he's sleepin' in de moon."

"Wise chaps, those darkies," Baldwin said, as the rattle of horse-pails and the clatter of a stall door smothered the sound.

The girl did not answer, and Baldwin's voice held a coaxing softness as he said: "Beth."

"Yes, I'm here—thanks to Roland's dilatoriness."

"Bless old Plowden! I'm going to talk to you, Beth, about—well, the great talk. If I'm exceeding the speed-limit stop me. I haven't the faintest idea what I'm going to say, but I know what I want to talk about. See, Beth, must our happiness—well, *my* happiness—depend upon this chance winning of the race? Can't you decide for yourself? Why should such a priceless thing as the course of two lives rest upon the ability of a horse to jump a mud wall?"

The girl gave a tired, impatient turn of her face away from Baldwin.

"Wait, Beth, till I plead my case, and then I know you'll do what's for the best," he resumed. "In the first place, I love you absolutely. My mines bring me in far more money than I shall ever use. I'll clear off the whole business with Rosemont, for your father. Heavens, money! It's nothing, and you're everything!"

The girl stretched out her hand in silent expostulation, but Baldwin added hastily: "Don't misunderstand me; I don't want to take advantage of Rosemont's absence. If you will simply say that you love him, or wish to marry him, then you must forgive me. I can only plead that I would gladly do anything in the world to make you absolutely a free agent to take me or refuse me."

The girl's hand had now found Baldwin's arm; he felt the fingers vibrate with suppressed intensity, but Beth's voice was quite contained as she said in measured tones: "You don't anger me. It just distresses me that I can't act as I should like to—hardly that, perhaps, for I am following my own line of thought. I can't explain so that you can understand, but you must just believe in me. If we lose each other we must just smile and smile like good losers—like thoroughbreds. Perhaps it was mother's overzeal for me; anyway, the whole thing is unutterably complicated, and the one that can cut the Gor-

dian knot is Rosemont. Can't you understand, Javvers, my feelings, when I took this gambler's chance? Must one go on explaining and explaining and showing one's soul before people believe one has a soul?"

"Forgive me, Beth. Just my feelings clouded my intellect. I am stupid—stupid."

"My dear boy, you are just magnificent."

"Tell me, Beth, do you love me?"

"When you've won the race ask me that question."

"And if I lose—if Fate turns his thumb down?"

"You must smile into my eyes and say good-by."

"I can't do it, Beth, I can't do it."

"You must; and you can, for you're a man. I'm only a woman, and what am I doing?"

"But it seems so foolish, so cruel."

"It does, I admit that."

Again the girl's hand reached to Baldwin's wrist, and the fingers closed in on the flesh with a compress of steel. There was the hurried, rushing chuck-chuck of an automobile, two blaring lights, like goblin eyes, stared blatantly through the gateway, and as the goblin's body lurched drunkenly to the steps of the Club-House the two sitters realized for the first time that the evening shadows had stolen down to their home among the trees, and that they sat in the half-gloom of evening.

"De goblin he go cotch us—hang that inopportune fiend!" Baldwin muttered.

"It's Roland!" the girl said in a voice that held regret. "I'm going to be very angry with him and scold," she added. "That will put him on the defensive, and keep him from being shocked at my sitting here chaperoned by a young man."

They turned their heads expectantly at the sound of hurrying footsteps clicking on the floor of the dining-room. The footsteps ceased, and some one was speaking to the club steward. At that instant the lights on the veranda sprang into existence, and the girl caught herself wondering why the steward had not turned them on before; why she had not noticed their absence.

Then Lord Rosemont came out from between the glass doors to the veranda, crying eagerly: "By Jove! Miss Holman, awfully sorry; Plowden——" Then he recognized Baldwin, and his face froze into studied politeness. "Ah! Mr. Baldwin! So glad Miss Holman has not been left entirely alone. One of Plowden's horses was taken with colic over at Gravesend, and—and—I really don't know which of us forgot, Miss Holman."

"Oh, don't mention it. A race-horse, and with colic—a woman!" She spread both hands, and curled her lips in a gesture of depreciation.

"Oh, I say!" Rosemont expostulated. "It wasn't like that, you know—Plowden was nearly frantic. It was Water-Carrier. Besides, Plowden understood the Raneys were coming here to keep you company; but, by Jove, everything got in the most wonderful hurly-burly. They went to the races—thought you were there; I picked them up—Adèle and Georgie—and they're out in the machine now. I'm awfully sorry—there's just room for one." Rosemont looked at Baldwin, an affected misery of regret in his face.

"I'm going back by train," Baldwin declared, "so it doesn't matter."

"And Plowden had the calm assurance to leave me here alone all evening when he——"

"Oh, by Jove! I say! You weren't here alone, you know."

Baldwin was tempted to laugh at the full-fledged regret in Rosemont's tone.

"Ethically worse!" Beth declared emphatically.

Baldwin winced; then he chuckled softly, seeing a cloud hover over Rosemont's face.

"I've been sitting here alone with a young man listening to a darky singing love-songs about a copper moon. But it's so like Roland to forget all about it and then send somebody. His insouciance is appalling. They say that when his hat blows off in the street he sends for a messenger-boy to retrieve it."

"Plowden is casual, I must admit. If

I had known in time that you were here, why of course——"

"But you didn't, so I don't mind."

"But what are we to do about—there's only one seat," Rosemont lamented.

"I'll go back by train," Beth declared.

"My dear Miss Beth!"

"Mr. Baldwin was good enough to keep me company, and I can't desert him now. Besides, Lord Rosemont, you mustn't think that I'm coming into the vineyard at the eleventh hour. I should have been in New York now if I'd had car fare—will you lend me money for my ticket?"

"Certainly, if you wish it; but you would find the car more comfortable, I should say."

Lord Rosemont drew forth a bill and offered it hesitatingly.

Beth took it, saying: "Thank you, Lord Rosemont. Consider this a fine for not having proper accommodation for travelers."

Lord Rosemont lifted his hat; as he turned away his heels seemed to flick angrily in the club lights.

Baldwin and Beth followed through the dining-room, and stood watching Rosemont back his car through the gates and disappear up the road.

"By George! He *is* cross," Baldwin remarked; then he laughed. "I say, Beth, I had money all the time. See—I want to confess."

"Why did you tell a fib then, and keep me here?"

"I would do it again; and at the last I wanted to see you conquer Rosemont; it was a psychological study. If he wins that steeplechase——"

"Don't talk about it!" The girl's voice was almost a sob.

Baldwin looked at her curiously; the bantering coquettishness had gone out of her face, and the clear-cut lines of it gleamed pathetically in the evening light.

"Let us go home," he said. "I'll tell the steward we don't want dinner. I don't think I could eat now. We can catch a trolley up at the main entrance that will run us to Queens or Jamaica where we'll get a train for the city."

As they walked along by the high iron fence, once Baldwin broke the silence to say: "I've been so happy that I believe I'm tired."

"Yes, I am tired."

There was the tribute to a great friendship, a superlative understanding between the two, in a meditative silence, almost unbroken by words, that possessed them as the train whirled to Long Island City. Baldwin sat running the steeplechase over and over in his mind, balancing the magnitude of the Liverpool and the water-jump against the mighty strength of Heros. All that was in Baldwin of persuasiveness and magnetism, all his love for the girl and the knowledge that she valued it, was as nothing against the curiously quixotic compact she had voluntarily entered into. Things that should have won a woman who was willing to be won were entirely inefficacious, secondary to the extraordinarily commonplace ability of a horse to successfully negotiate three miles of steeplechase-course and win over Sandstorm.

Baldwin whispered to himself: "God! Was a man ever bound by such shackles of straw!"

The girl drummed idly on the window, and questioned the gloom of the night, wondering to herself why she was bound by perhaps hypercritical ideas of duty; why she should accept as almost irrevocable a destiny planned for her by others, even though one of the others were her mother; why the only seeming door of liberation was a gambling chance, almost a trick, something to cause Rosemont to renounce rights that were really not his.

They took a cab from the ferry at Thirty-fourth Street, and, as she bade Baldwin good-by at her door, Beth said: "I'm not going to see you any more until race-day."

"But that's over a week," the man pleaded.

"I know; but I'm quite determined. You can devote your time to Heros, for you *must* win—do you hear, you *must* win. Now good night."

"Beth, don't let de goblin go cotch you, by de moon, de coppah moon,"

Baldwin called softly, turning on the stone steps.

"Ride fast and strong, then—good night, good night!"

CHAPTER VII.

It was the day of the International match.

Beth scanned her face narrowly in a glass, questioning the reflection as though she analyzed the profile of another being. Was she a coward? Why did a foreboding of disaster hover about her? Why did she see forever the grim outlines of that Liverpool rising as a rampart that barred her from Elysian gardens? Where was her sporting blood now—her thoroughbred quality that had accepted a throw of the dice with smiling nonchalance? Was it that the stake had grown so mighty, so precious; or was it an intuitive forewarning to steel her against defeat? Perhaps it was just that her nerves were tensioned to the long endeavor of interest, and that her mind repeated mechanically the name of the Liverpool as an overtired person murmurs a familiar phrase as he sinks to sleep.

She turned from the glass, the parting glance reflecting querulous dissatisfaction, or perhaps it was the shadow of defeat.

Half mechanically she perused the morning papers, reading with intense interest what the turf-writers had to say of the steeplechase. Perhaps from these wise gentry she would glean encouragement.

The match had provoked great interest, but the experts all had the same questions to ask: Why had an untried horse like Heros been selected to run for America? Why had a horse that had never won a big steeplechase been pitted against Sandstorm, who had been third in the Grand National and was a winner? Lord Rosemont also had a reputation in England, had ridden in the Grand National; but who was Javvers Baldwin? One writer declared that Heros fenced well; but jumping well in a training-gallop was quite a different thing from racing three miles over the stiff Belmont course. The writers all picked Sandstorm to win, as he seemed to have rounded into perfect condition, and his quality was known.

The girl frowned combatively as she read these comments. They didn't know Heros as she did; neither did they know his rider. Buoyantly she declared: "Heros *shall* win!" In her defiance she had said this aloud, and like a derisive echo came up through the open window a tattoo of repeated honks from Rosemont's motor. It was a signal to the senator, for Beth and her father were to go in Lord Rosemont's car to Belmont.

"For luck!" the girl said, as she stuck a silver horseshoe, set with moonstones, rakishly in her tie. "And I must be interested when I grasp at symbols of luck," she continued mentally, hurrying to answer her father's calling voice.

On the run to Belmont the talk invariably came back to the International, disagreeably atmosphered by the exhilaration so evident in Rosemont's manner. His voice, pitched half an octave higher, cut like a knife through the whirring monotone of the motor's hum.

In the Club-House Beth felt as though she sat in a court of justice waiting for the hour of trial. Three races were run; they were like funeral processions—the delays between interminable. She sat in a mercenary atmosphere; voices babbled of dollars, of winnings and losings. The men and women were idolaters who knelt before Mammon and laved his golden feet with their tears of regret, and dried them with their smiles of victory.

Beth was conscious of a curious metamorphosis; she was governed by a peculiar elation of interest that lifted her to a pedestal from which she looked down upon the others who appeared like children groveling in the mud for pennies.

A woman at Beth's side, her fingers ringed repulsively—splashed like the back of a toad with the blood-color of ruby, and the green of emerald, and the changing medley of diamond tints—was whining over the loss of a bet on Blue-

point, declaring that the jockey had pulled the horse. Beth shuddered at the selfish commonness of the woman, who, chagrined at the loss of her gambled dollars, blackened a boy's name. Her own hazard dwarfed the other's money-loss till it seemed too miserably tawdry for complaint. Beth was staking the happiness of a lifetime on a race that would presently be won or lost, and she was steeling her heart to accept the result with a smile on her lips.

Beth had seen nothing of Baldwin; in fact, she had not thought of his non-appearance. Her mind had been so full of the steeplechase and its attendant consequences that she had sat practically in the future, so absorbed that Rosemont, half angered by her indifference to his talk, had gone off to hover about Sandstorm, somewhat in the way of viewing the force that was to change all this. Now he was back, saying:

"Come down to the paddock, Miss Beth. Sandstorm and Heros are both there, and there's plenty of shade."

"That's a good idea, Rosemont," Senator Holman declared. "I'm going to have a bet this time; one ought to be able to pick a winner in a two-horse race."

As Beth retraced her steps to reclaim her fan she heard the querulous-voiced woman say to her companion: "That's a good idea the old gentleman's got about a winner in a field of two. I'm going to get my losings back on that English horse; he'll win; the papers tip him. They're behind the age in everything but racing over there."

"Except trading off a share in a title for our American dollars," her companion added, with a disagreeable laugh. "They say this Sandstorm belongs to an English lord who is going to marry Senator Somebody's daughter, and I guess that'll cost papa a cool million—perhaps five. I guess their aristocracy would be a little threadbare if it weren't for our money."

As Beth passed from the shadow of the Club-House, with its discordant echo of voices that dwelt forever upon money-values, into the sunlight, and felt the velvety grass under her feet, a sudden rejuvenation of hopefulness crept into her heart. Two robins that hopped fearlessly about the paddock seemed to reproach her for her doubts. Was not her destiny, like their lives, in the hand of Fate or some more idealized power?

She had shivered with apprehension in the roofed shade; now in the sunlight she must have laughed, for the senator asked: "What's funny, girl?"

"Nothing—everything; it's just good to be alive, dad. The atmosphere of this paddock, vibrant with the pulsating life of these great, glorious thoroughbreds, thrills me—I feel happy."

"I don't," her father growled. "I lost a bet on that wall-eyed bronco they call Bucephalus. If Alexander's riding-horse was like his namesake he was the worst kind of a quitter."

"Father, you're what they call a piker—one who bets small and cries large."

"That's all right; it's natural. He wouldn't be a piker if he weren't short on change; that's why it hurts when he loses. You'll have a pair of gloves on Heros to-day, and when Sandstorm beats him you'll be as disconsolate as though you had bet your heritage."

Looking up, Beth found Rosemont's eyes fixed upon her face with a look of disconcerting inquiry. "You are quite wrong, father," she answered, forcing a smile to her lips. "If I lose my wager on Heros I shall pay up and look happy."

"Splendid, Miss Beth," Rosemont commented. "I'm so deeply interested that I can't hope you may win; though if you lose, patriotically backing the American combination, we winners must try to merge your defeat in our victory so happily that you'll never regret it."

"Noble sentiments!" The senator laughed. "Very theatrical—over a pair of gloves. But don't you bet with Beth, Rosemont; she'll find some woman's quibble, some claim of foul or something for not paying up; women are all alike; you've got to have a signed compact with them."

"Women are all alike—except your

daughter, senator. I'd stake all Hawthorne on her word," Rosemont objected gallantly. "Besides, you're too late with the warning, for we have a little bet on this event; and, by Jove! I must rush away to put on the colors."

The senator dropped to a bench in the shade of an elm, saying: "Let's sit here, girl, and watch them cinch those leather plasters they call saddles on the nags. Hello! There's your hack, Heros, being saddled up as if he were a regular race-horse. By George! Beth, Baldwin looks racy in his riding outfit—more like one of the Meadow Hunt chaps than a Western mine-jumper."

"Father!" Beth's hand fell upon the senator's plump fingers, and somewhat sheepishly he expostulated: "Say, girl, it's hardly playing the game fair; he's against me and you bamboozle me into helping him score over Rosemont."

"You're unfair, father." A sudden determination took possession of Beth; her fingers closed tightly on the senator's; she turned her face till their eyes met—in the girl's a look of serious pleading. "I'm going to tell you something that will astonish you, father. I feel that I ought to, though it's betraying trust, in a way. Mr. Baldwin offered you half a million dollars for the Lone Ledge just because—because——" Beth stopped, hesitating to say "because of me," and her father, taking up the broken sentence, said:

"Because he thought he could buy me off—steal the mine because I was in need of the money."

"No, father, you are wrong. The man Connors, who sold his supposed right to you, was the thief."

"Oh, I've heard that before," the senator objected.

The girl continued, not noticing the interruption: "And Connors put a wire around Patriarch's leg and lamed him."

"Don't believe it!"

"It's true, father. Mr. Baldwin has the proof; Pinkerton's men found out all about it."

"Why didn't Baldwin prosecute him if that's true?"

"For somewhat the same reason that he offered you the half-million for the mine, father."

"Beth, it's a hot day, and I don't care a rap how old Ann was. Just tell me, please, what you're driving at, girl?"

"I will, father. Mr. Baldwin made you that offer for my sake."

"Saint Maria! Do you mean that he's in love with you?"

The girl's face reddened with confusion. Something of the tentative delicacy of Baldwin's scarcely expressed regard seemed shattered, like frail glass, at the senator's abrupt wording. Then in a low voice she answered: "I think he is, father.

"And you, girl?"

There was a pause before Beth answered, as they sat looking into each other's eyes; in the senator's a startled, almost angry demand. "I think I love him, too, father."

The senator pursed his lips to express his astonishment in a low, long-drawn whistling note.

"You are not angry, father? I don't think either of us could help it."

"I don't think you tried; and I do think mother will feel that the world has come to an end. Beth, it's just madness; you're as good as engaged to Rosemont—he's all right."

Then the senator's mind inexplicably whisked about to the matter of the Lone Ledge, and he added: "It's a trick; Baldwin knows the mine belongs to me."

"No, father. Evans and Baldwin's lawyers have sufficient evidence to prove that Connors has no claim whatever, and that he was just robbing you. Mr. Baldwin is too honest, too fine a character to claim what is not his."

"Beth, I guess you *are* in love. But why do you tell me this now?" the senator, shifting again in his thoughts, asked irritably. "It's too late; your mother will be——"

But Beth, interrupting, explained: "I wanted to tell you now, because it will all be settled in less than half an hour."

"Oh, Lord!" the senator groaned. "What are you talking about, girl?"

Then Beth talked fast and with earnestness, explaining to her father all

that the race meant to her, and how, if Lord Rosemont lost, her mother would never know but that he had changed his mind.

Something in the extraordinary gambling quality of the compact appealed to Senator Holman. He had been a fearless plunger in mines and stocks himself; it had cost him dearly; but something of the exhilaration of the mighty risks came back to him as he listened to Beth, and he said: "By George, girl, you have got a bit of your dad's foolishness in you; you play for high stakes; and it's up to Rosemont good and strong."

"You'll cheer for Heros, won't you, father? You'll be pleased if we win, won't you, dad?"

The father drew Beth's hand a little closer to him, answering: "I guess I've got to, girl; but—if you lose?"

"Mother will be pleased."

"Sentimentally it works out, girl, but, Saint Maria, where am I at? If Rosemont wins Baldwin takes my mine—if he can; if Baldwin wins whom do I fight for the Lone Ledge—my son-in-law, or my partner, Lord Rosemont? It's like a three-handed game of euchre. I thought it was badly mixed before, but now—— Great Heavens!"

"Things were mixed, father, disagreeably so; I had to take this mad chance, and you'll have to trust to things coming out all right."

"I've sat in the loser's seat for five years, girl, so I suppose I can't weaken now. We've always been chums, Beth, pals, haven't we and I'll——"

A soft shimmer of primrose cross-hatched by gold where the sun fell upon the crinkling silk, almost at her shoulder, caught Beth's eye. Turning, she saw Rosemont, and except that the racing garb was painfully new his appearance was not half bad. Somehow to Beth Lord Rosemont had always seemed strangely out of place talking of cross-country riding and racing; a lazy drag in his manner and speech lisped of West-End clubs, and bridge.

The senator eyed Rosemont critically, drifting into speech with: "You look fit, Rosemont."

"By Jove! I have had a gruelling to get into condition; like one of those Hindu fakirs starving himself into a tough mentality. I'm all withered up." And Lord Rosemont placed a hand pathetically over the draw-string of his silken jacket. "But I don't mind—the game's worth it."

"I should say so; twenty-five thousand dollars for cutting out a few heavy dinners."

"*Mon Dieu!* I wouldn't play the ascetic, as I've done, for that many sovereigns. I'm out to win my little bet with your daughter. Stand prepared to pay over." And Rosemont nodded his primrose cap very emphatically at Beth.

"Beth will pay if you win," the senator said reassuringly.

Rosemont looked puzzled—then he laughed: "And ten minutes ago, my dear senator, you were warning me that she'd default."

"I've changed my mind about women," the senator remarked enigmatically. "I thought I understood them, but I don't."

This so puzzled Rosemont that he gave it up, immediately saying: "Come and look at Sandstorm."

"Not for me," growled the senator. "I'll sit under this banana-tree till the sandstorm comes round."

CHAPTER VIII.

As the two walked across the paddock Rosemont suddenly asked: "Does the senator know, Miss Beth? He seemed deuced serious over the bet just now."

"Father knows," Beth answered simply.

"And does *he* know?" Rosemont flicked his riding-whip toward a tall figure in a blue jacket.

A sudden inspiration came to Beth that Rosemont had played a losing card; the knowledge that Baldwin knew of the stake he rode for would disturb his nerve. She answered as simply as she had before: "Yes, Mr. Baldwin knows."

"By Jove!" And Rosemont crossed

the shadow of a big elm in silence; then he asked: "And if I lose the race what happens?"

"Mr. Baldwin wins, I suppose." And Beth laughed cheerfully.

"Just his bet—or—or?"

"He wins all that you lose."

"By Jove!"

There was a despondent ring to the ejaculation; the girl's answer had been like a flick in the face with a glove. The money-bet had not meant much to Lord Rosemont; but the knowledge that he would now ride knee to knee with Baldwin for the great prize of Beth's hand clearly disturbed his equanimity.

They had come to where Sandstorm was being saddled, and Rosemont, with an effort that was physically evident, recovered something of his usual placidity, saying half audibly, as though reassuring himself: "It really doesn't matter."

"What doesn't matter, Lord Rosemont?"

"About Mr. Baldwin—his chances of winning are so slight, I mean. Just look at Sandstorm, Miss Beth; doesn't he show class, and breeding, and quality? He's the picture of his sire, Surefoot; and when Surefoot wanted to give his running I believe he was one of the fastest horses we ever had. We've been at the game so long in England that we know just what class means—it's everything."

"Still there must be some other element as a factor, Lord Rosemont. We'll say that Sandstorm is of the most exalted family, and on my side—I mean the American side, of course—we'll say that Heros can run faster, jump better, and stay the course."

"I really believe you want Heros to beat Sandstorm—Baldwin to win," Lord Rosemont said petulantly.

"What I desire, like the question of pedigree, will matter little now; the race, soulless, unsympathetic, will settle the whole business." The girl looked into Rosemont's moody face and continued, a bantering smile on her lips: "The situation is idealistic, isn't it, Lord Rosemont? Three wise people went to sea in a bowl——"

"But it isn't a bowl," Rosemont interrupted, with vexed quality in his voice. "I don't mind telling you, Miss Beth—it can't offend you—that I shouldn't have risked what I have, losing you, if I hadn't felt so certain of winning. Look out!"

With a quick grasp Rosemont almost swung the girl off her feet as Sandstorm, enraged by the girth's pinch on his satin skin, swung out his wide saucer hoofs viciously. Little tufts of grass, half-moons clipped from the turf by his racing plates, spattered against Beth's face and the primrose jacket.

"My God! That was a close shave!" Rosemont gasped.

Beth looked curiously into the man's white face, the intense timbre of his voice ringing pleasantly in her ears. "He does care a lot," she thought. "It's almost a pity——" Then at once she realized that that was the full sum of her feeling, nothing beyond pity, no response of stronger feeling. And Rosemont was now stilling the remorse, in colorless tones saying: "But isn't Sandstorm fit? There isn't a horse in England could beat him to-day over three miles of country. By Jove! Look at that lean, arched neck, it's like whalebone. There, catch his eye—it's beautiful; I know of but one pair of eyes more beautiful than Sandstorm's."

Beth remained silent, not giving recognition to the implied compliment, and Rosemont continued his rhapsody: "He's just bone and muscle. See those two little ravines running down his quarters, the water-marks we call them—shows the fat is all gone and he's fit, fit. Ah! Here comes your mighty Heros, Miss Beth. I must say that he doesn't quite look classy enough to do up Sandstorm."

Baldwin, who had sauntered over behind his horse, joined Beth and her companion, saying: "Your horse looks well, Lord Rosemont; he's a picture."

Beth's ear, attuned by her intensity of interest, caught the ring of unbiased appreciation in the speaker's tones. Mentally she compared this with the captious quality of Rosemont's comparison.

And the latter, as if unconsciously

inspired by a spirit of depreciation, answered: "And condition was about the only unknown factor. To tell you the truth, Mr. Baldwin, I feared that more than I did your American jumpers. To bring a horse from England and race him the first season was no joke, I must say. Heros looks a bit above himself; is he a gross horse, racing big? In England we'd feel bound to take a lot of that flesh off—that's for a distance race, of course. I did own a big black named Maxim that looked like an animated beer-barrel, but he could crack off three-quarters faster than anything in England."

"You bet he's faster than anything in England!" the senator commented. "Phew! By George, it's hot!"

The old gentleman stood mopping his forehead, having just arrived in time to hear Rosemont's last words.

"Who, father?" Beth queried.

"Why, Heros, of course; our American champion."

"Lord Rosemont thinks differently, father—thinks he doesn't show class enough."

"He does, eh? I guess he's entitled to an opinion because he's paying for it this time. But out in Idaho when I picked out a cayuse for a long ride I reached for a big one; a good big one will always beat a good little one, that's my experience; and quality is generally hidden away in some corner where you can't see it, horse, man, or woman. Sandstorm is too perky to fill the bill with me; I'm going to bet five on Heros."

"You wouldn't have given much for Hermit then, senator; but he won a mighty Derby," Rosemont remarked, with a complacent smile on his lips.

"And if he had a temper like your horse, Lord Rosemont, I'd give less for him."

This remark was occasioned by a mad scramble of men and women as Sandstorm, dragging the colored boy at the end of the leading-line, raced backward, snorting in rage.

"And I'm delighted to see him that way," Rosemont declared quietly. "He's on his mettle to-day, that's all I wanted."

Beth heard a man's voice in a little group behind her saying: "That English horse ought to win this match hands-down if the Britisher can ride a little bit. It's a race-horse against a cavalry charger; America gets the worst of it this trip, or I don't know a horse from a harness-maker's wooden dummy."

Something in this comment depressed the girl; it had an authoritative ring. Perhaps she was just blinded by desire, oblivious to a superiority in Sandstorm evident to all others.

Then a low, quiet voice, just audible, came in sustaining consolation: "Don't you make any mistake, Barney. I've trained jumpers for twenty years and the other morning I saw that big bay, Heros, go through the field in a way that would have kept the best steeplechaser we ever had, old Good Measure, stretching his neck from start to finish. And that chap that's ridin' Heros—say, talk about nerve!—well, Reagan couldn't give him three pounds. Heros went at his jumps same's they was little saw-logs. The books 're layin' five to four against the American horse, just because he ain't got a record, an' I'm goin' to have a bit of that easy money."

At that instant a strong voice rang through the paddock: "Mount your horses, gentlemen!" And Rosemont, lingering for a moment, asked pleadingly: "Wish me luck, Beth."

Beth smiled; then her lips rounded from the bewitching curve, and through them issued a whistled bar of "Yankee Doodle."

"I don't mind—I like it, Miss Beth," Rosemont commented. "If you lose you'll be just as loyal——"

"They're waiting, my lord," Rosemont's riding-boy, Jowkes, interrupted respectfully.

As Rosemont hurried to his horse, Beth, with quick, impulsive strides, stood beside Baldwin, who was trying the pressure of the girth on Heros' barrel.

"You're like a woman putting the last touch to her toilet, Javvers," she said.

At the sound of her voice Baldwin turned a quick, radiant face. Beth had called him Javvers.

"I'm so glad—so glad you've come to wish me luck," he said simply. "I ride happy—win or lose."

"You must win, do you hear? You, too, Heros—you *must* win."

Beth turned away as quickly as she had come. Her lips that had whistled the bar of "Yankee Doodle" so jauntily, compressed to the edge of pain over her white teeth. She saw Baldwin swing himself with a lithe movement to the saddle, where he sat knotting the reins. His lean face held the hungry look of fierce resolve; his broad, flat back and tapering limbs spoke of the outdoor life that had fibered his frame to untiring endeavor.

As Heros fell into line behind Sandstorm, Baldwin turned and smiled confidently at the girl. Then he eased his weight forward over the high, unpleasing wither of the big bay, and Beth remembered how he had ridden like that in the gallop over the training jumps. In contrast, she saw that Rosemont sat back in the saddle heavily, like a dragoon—the English manner. These things she noticed in the way of vantage.

And Heros, big and strong, his long, well-shaped shoulders running up into the arched wither, was just the make of horse to stand up under the American seat that Rosemont counted so dangerous, so apt to bring a horse down. Surely these things would help; while, on the other hand, Rosemont's weight, almost back on Sandstorm's loins, would anchor the horse after each mighty leap. Surely the racy form of the chestnut would tire under that ill-placed burden.

CHAPTER IX.

"Well, they're in for it now, sure! Come on, girl, let's go up into the club and see the last act," Senator Holman said, slipping his hand through Beth's arm. "By George, here's Plowden!"

"Just got down in time," the latter declared, hurrying up. "I wouldn't have been here to-day at all only for this match. Just able to crawl—got sun yesterday in this horse-garden. But I wanted to see Baldwin show Rosey that England's a back number."

"You're English yourself, Roland," Beth reproached as they climbed the club stairs.

The senator was trundling up rather heavily behind, and Plowden, lowering his voice, answered: "Not in this affair, Beth; I'm yours truly."

"Why do you say that? Why so intense?"

"Telepathy—intuition; no little bird has whispered anything. Rosemont is very confident that he's going to win. Ah! There are three seats. Here we are, senator, nice and comfortable, and a good view—to win," Plowden resumed to Beth, "but Baldwin will beat him, sure."

"I wish I could feel that confidence," the girl answered, slipping into a chair with a tired sigh. "I have a strange, foolish foreboding about the Liverpool Cobalt came to grief at. I can't escape from it; I suppose every one has off days in courage."

"Nonsense! Heros takes that jump like a bird—I've seen him do it. Besides, you must not throw off those fear-germs; they are little devils of disaster that hop across space from mind to mind—that is, if the minds are attuned to sympathy."

"Oh!" Beth had interrupted the speaker with a cry of fear. As the two horses turned in the parade, Sandstorm, feeling the tickle of Rosemont's spurs, had crouched, swung back a stride, and kicked viciously, just missing the shoulder of Heros.

"That was a close shave," Plowden remarked, "but Baldwin will watch him from this on."

"That sorrel won't run kindly to-day," the senator added; "he's made up his mind to mischief. You see if I'm not right."

The horses were now leisurely crossing the infield; the sun tinting Rosemont's primrose jacket to the yellow of a marigold; and the satiny chestnut coat of Sandstorm was reflecting

patches of bronze and burnt gold and deep tawny brown. Even there in the sunlight Heros looked common; his coat was just a deep, solemn blood-red.

For an instant Beth turned her eyes, strained by the distance, and swept them along the grand stand with its terraced frontage of faces. It was like a giant combing-wave of humanity rising twenty feet, ready to topple over and sweep with a great surge to the course. On its top, like heliographs, fans and straw hats and race-glasses glinted the sunlight in a bewildering maze of white flashes. Even the lawn in front was hidden by a solid mass of rounded shoulders, all turned the same way; all the myriad eyes, twenty thousand pairs, were focused on those two bright splashes of blue and primrose across the green oval that was like a huge emerald stone set in the pink frame of the earth-course.

In Beth's mind something of selfishness, almost egoism, belittled the interests that held the mob to the magnet of the two racers; money again—sordid gold; perhaps a little national pride; defeat or victory to be wiped out by a bottle of wine or another race; while she was staking a life's happiness on such a mad, insecure thing as the luck of a steeplechase. Why had she done it? Why had she not told her mother that she would not marry Rosemont? Her mother! That was the reason. All her questionings as to what course she was to pursue had just ended in that way.

With a sigh she turned her eyes back across the field.

"There they go!" Plowden exclaimed sharply.

The huge wave in the grand stand must be combing for a break; there was a crash as of falling timbers—as if a fierce wind had suddenly shrieked through the trees, rocking the huge iron structure like a cradle.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Plowden. "The little elephant is not so slow—he's like a cat on his feet!" For the big bay was in front of the chestnut, half a length.

"Now for the Liverpool!" Plowden muttered, his voice muffled by the clamp of his hands that held race-glasses. "Ah! Isn't he a bird!"

At the take-off the primrose jacket had drawn level with the blue; they rose together. But what was the curious lengthening of stride in mid-air that carried the bay, with the blue flattened to his wither, half a length to the front. As they raced again it was a length.

"And I only bet a measly five dollars on that old giraffe!" moaned the senator. "By jinks! Rosey's got a great chance in this race! Say! He rides like a fat preacher—pounding leather surely."

"They've a long way to go yet," Plowden declared judicially; "anything may happen."

They saw the chestnut creep up inch by inch on the bay until at the next jump they rose together again. Once more, as they swung into stride after the flying leap, Heros was in the lead. Then they took the one jump that was at the upper end of the oval, and came like chargers at the second Liverpool, just beyond the stand. They were end on, and to say which was in the lead was impossible. The thousands waited, as noiselessly as sleeping children, to see which horse lifted first at the huge brush-covered mud wall.

Just two color splashes, blue and primrose, and two pairs of tapered ears—one pricked forward in eagerness, and the other lying back as if in viciousness—could be seen above the green broom of the Liverpool.

Up lifted the primrose, and the next instant the blue.

"Gad! It's glorious!" ejaculated Plowden. "See the English horse prop when he lands! That's what loses him the length every time he jumps; Heros is racing all the time."

The multitude was so still that Beth could hear the pound of the eager hoofs, and she could see her loved Heros, his great, wise head straight out, running his own race, and his rider crouched as gently over the high wither as though he nursed a babe.

But the rhythmic gallop of the chestnut was so smooth, so devoid of waste action, that she realized, half bitterly,

the truth of what Rosemont had said about the Derby quality, the finesse of breeding, the perfected thoroughbred. How evenly his full-muscled quarters reached beneath—how level he galloped. Yes, he had the speed over Heros. The bay's galloping was big, and powerful, and long-striding, but there was somewhere an evidence of labor.

Now they were at the water-jump. Rosemont, with a touch of vanity, pushed to a lead in front of the stand; while Baldwin, nursing his horse between the jumps, was a length behind the chestnut.

"Up!" It was Plowden lifting his voice to Sandstorm as the chestnut rose high, inches of atmosphere between his hoofs and the brush, and landed clear of the water. But he came down as he had lifted, without a swing. Rosemont seemed to sag in the saddle.

"Say! He's a pippin!" This exuberant note welled from the senator as Heros, with a curious side swing, came over like the swoop of a bird, his gathered hoofs kissing the brush; and they struck the turf a yard beyond the hoof-prints of Sandstorm. And the bay was racing; in a dozen strides he was a neck in front.

The sleeping stand roared in wakefulness. Beth heard her own voice—it sounded far away—cackle a dry laugh. A twinge of pain gave her knowledge that with her right hand she had grasped her bodice and the flesh beneath.

"Say! That old giraffe'll gallop all day!" the senator chuckled. "Rosey's on a loser. And he's been cackling to me about the raw riders we've got in this country. Jee-rusalem! He's stately enough; he ought to have his coronet on."

"He rides safer, though," Plowden moralized. "If Heros ever clicks one of the rails with his toes God help Baldwin! He's all forward, as you see, and his weight will bring the horse down, sure. But on the other hand, Rosemont is taking a lot out of Sandstorm, sitting back that way. It's just the difference in seat that gave the American jocks such a pull in England."

"Oh!" A little cry from Beth caused Plowden to swing his glasses quickly on the glittering dots of primrose and blue that were slipping down the course. "What was it?" he asked, for the two were racing now on the level, seemingly side by side.

"I think Heros struck, or else Sandstorm jostled him."

"That's all right. If he struck and didn't come down he's all right from this on—he'll jump cleaner because he's not tired yet."

Around the bottom turn they swung; on the flat, Beth saw Sandstorm draw to the front and lead by a length. Judging from Rosemont's contented seat in the saddle, the horse must be going strong. Her heart commenced to sink. Was Rosemont really a seer who had decided her fate upon the lines of fine breeding?

Up the back, at each jump Heros gained; and on the flat, Sandstorm once more won his lead of a length. What a pounding, monotonous striving it was. Now they were at the jump she dreaded. They were over. Again her evil presentiment was disproved, and Heros had gained much at the big wall. How fiercely they raced; the short, quick rhythmic strides of the chestnut carrying him on to the cutting down of the bay's lead.

Beth hung breathlessly on each uplift of the two gallant thoroughbreds, her heart holding a query of disaster till the hoofs again cut at the turf.

"Now for the ditch!" somebody just behind Beth cried involuntarily as the two raced at the water-jump—speeding fast for the swing to clear its sun-mirrored width.

In the stand many, thinking it the finish, were in a frenzy of excitement. Voices were calling: "Sandstorm wins! Come on you, America! Come on, Heros!"

Again Rosemont tried to draw out well in the lead passing the stand; but Baldwin had learned that his coign of vantage lay in the formidable jumps, and he drove at the big bay. Heros, great of heart, untiring of frame, answering the call, gathered his great

quarters, skimmed over the brush and ditch, and thundered on as though he had barely checked in his stride.

Tears of joy were in the girl's eyes—they blinded her. Crossly she wiped them away; and now she could see that Rosemont, startled by the rush of Heros, was driving at the chestnut to regain the lead he had lost.

The Babel of cheers in the stand had died away to a solemn silence, and Beth heard the thin, piping voice of a woman squeak grotesquely: "Say! You can't beat America, can you? That Britisher got his over that clay fence!"

"Shouldn't wonder if that would break Rosemont's heart," Plowden drawled. "He's rattled, I can see."

"And, by jingo, if he monkeys with that cross-grained sorrel horse you bet there'll be trouble," the senator added. "If I was riding him I'd want to wear velvet gloves—he's a crank!"

"Yes," drawled Plowden, "I know that breed well. I saw his daddy, Sure-foot, run many times in England; and, by Jove, he was horse, jockey, and the whole outfit in any race he took part in. When he wanted to win he could win; but generally he was out for murder—he was a murderer at heart; man or beast, it didn't make any difference, if he could just get his teeth in flesh. The only rider that he would try for was a stable-boy named Jones, and the little lad used to just sit still in the saddle and let him have his own sweet will. Rosemont is now messing Sandstorm about; I saw him draw his whip at the lower far turn. I shouldn't mind betting it will cost him the race."

On the lower half of the back-stretch bay and chestnut took the two jumps almost together. Sandstorm was either tired or sulky; he seemed to run less free.

Through his powerful glasses Plowden could see the tapered ears lying flat back along the beautiful neck, giving the head the vicious look of a cobra. He saw the blond tail switch irritably, and knew that Rosemont was driving home the spurs.

But the untiring bay thundered on, with his big head lapped on the loin of the chestnut, and twice before they reached the Liverpool Rosemont turned his primrose-capped head to look if he were shaking off the blue.

"That's the last big jump, that Liverpool," Plowden said. "If they get over that it will be staying power that will win."

Beth's heart was choking her—it was hammering at her ribs till in fancy she heard its rapid beat. Something *would* happen; if it did would her nerve go, would she cry out in pain?

The senator was mumbling: "Shouldn't wonder if something would drop; John Bull and his nag are both tired, bet your life. If I was on the other horse I'd take a back seat at that jump for fear of accidents. Rosey's all right tooling a four-in-hand, but danged if I think he's up to much——"

"Gad! Baldwin isn't taking any back seat. See him drive at the bay. Lord! How that horse does come again; he's as game as a little one," Plowden interrupted in admiration.

Beth, speechless, tensed to quivering interest, saw the blue shoulders swing lower, saw Heros gain inch by inch on the chestnut as they raced like mad things at the earthed barrier; the bay's head was level with the chestnut's twenty feet short of the Liverpool. Suddenly the girl grasped and clung tremblingly to Plowden's arm as the chestnut, roused to fury by the hot breath of his stallion rival, struck with gleaming white teeth at the bay. To the left the fighting devil carried Heros; then in a mad sprawling leap they rose together at the jump, and, landing, crashed into the guarding wing.

With the quickness of a snake striking, Sandstorm savaged Heros, his teeth set in the other's crest.

Beth saw Baldwin's right arm go up, and his powerful fist smashed the chestnut full between the ears. The gasping cry that went up from thousands was like an echo of the blow.

Sandstorm's hold was broken, he staggered drunkenly. The bay seemed to tear himself from between the horse and the holding wing; he galloped. Rosemont smashed his whip home on

the chestnut's flank, and the horse, a length behind, swung into his stride.

"Say! That Baldwin is a hot one!" the senator said reverently.

"He will," Plowden declared.

But surely something more than they had seen had happened. At the jump at the upper turn Baldwin pitched in the saddle, he was almost down. The chestnut jumped like the tired horse that he was, but he landed, and now he was lapped on the bay.

Now they were turning into the straight run down to the winning-post, with its two jumps of rail and brush; they were outside of the course that held the Liverpool, just the two smaller jumps to take and it would all be over.

As they turned the corner somebody cried excitedly: "Baldwin's lost a stirrup—that's what's the matter. Come on, you good, game American, you! If you beat the Britisher I'll buy wine for the whole stand."

"Yes," Plowden advised, as he focused his glass on Baldwin, "our man has lost his stirrup, and isn't able to get his foot back. His horse is fresher; Sandstorm is dead tired—ah, hurrah! He's over! Gad, he *can* ride! Gained half a length on the chestnut. Heros will win, Beth—I'd bet a thousand to a walnut. Now they're at the last jump!"

He ceased speaking, and Beth knew that, like herself, he held his breath. The stand held its breath—there was no sound; the very air was dead.

Above the green brush of the last jump two forms towered together. There was a crack, like the note of a rifle—one of them had struck the top rail. It was the bay swerving at a sudden reel of his rider. But the strength of the horse! It carried him onward; his very lurch drove him past the chestnut who came down with a tired prop. Beth could see that Baldwin almost lay on the horse's neck, one leg dangling idly, guiltless of power.

Now they raced down the flat; fifty yards—thirty yards—the dogged, brave head of the bay in front, his rider wisely content; and Rosemont, rolling in his saddle out of sheer exhaustion, was flaying the chestnut's ribs with his whip.

Now the stand broke into a wild clamor; it was like the sack of a city by ribald soldiers. Running feet beat at the sounding boards, and many thousand voices swelled into a chorus of: "America wins—wins!" Discordant, shriller cries of: "Come on, you, Heros!"

Ten yards! Yes, the bay was a neck in front.

Oh, God! Beth couldn't wait—the tears blinded her. Men had rushed across in front of where they sat and her voice was just a husky whisper as she asked Plowden: "Did Heros win?"

"Rather! But it was a close fit."

The clamor had strangely hushed; the silence was like a lull between fitful storms. All eyes were glued upon the number-board across from the judges' stand.

Now the numbers clicked into place: Number *two!* That meant Heros first.

A cheer shattered the air.

Beth drew forth a little American flag, and passing it to Plowden, said: "Please—for Heros."

"It ought to be for Baldwin; he won the race. Hello! What's the matter? The boy seems dazed, or doesn't know the game."

From the back of Sandstorm Rosemont had slipped to the ground in front of the judges' stand, and was taking off his saddle to weigh in; and though the judge raised his hand as a signal for Baldwin to dismount, he sat on Heros staring blankly, with eyes that seemed eyes of not understanding.

"Gad! Something wrong—I must hurry!" Plowden declared, tearing away.

Beth saw two men dart from the judges' stand to the course; one of them put his hand gently on Baldwin's leg. Then he spoke hurriedly to the judge; and the next instant the two men lifted Baldwin from the back of Heros and carried him in to the scales.

The judge gave a sharp order, and a stable-boy stripped the saddle from the horse and followed.

From somewhere a hot wind seemed to smite Beth's nostrils, her brain reeled; she tried to steady herself, fix-

ing her eyes upon a white post as a point of equilibrium. The post raced up and down the greensward of the inner course and danced a ghostly can-can.

The senator's voice fell upon her ear heavily: "What's the matter, girl? Guess it ain't good to have a horse in a race, eh?"

Her discrimination hazed, she answered tensely: "Baldwin is badly injured, father."

"It hurts here, too, eh?"

The keen edge of her father's sharper tone cut away the cobwebs from the girl's brain, and she answered meekly: "Yes, father."

There was a whir of soft-rolling wheels like the beating wings of ducks in flight; a dark-hooded ambulance came speeding down the race-course and checked at the judges' stand; a small, stout man detached himself from the rear steps and passed swiftly through the little gate.

"I guess that's the doctor," Senator Holman said. "That plucky kid will be all right now. They've got this racing game down pretty fine in this country—shouldn't wonder if some of these jockeys get operated on for appendicitis between races."

"Good old dad!" Beth said, smiling faintly. "I'm all right now. I'd like to go down there and see——"

"Sit tight, girl; there're fool-people enough crowding around to shut out the air. Here he comes now—they're bringing him up to the club."

During these few minutes the multitude of people had waited in silent expectancy, each one engrossed with the humanitarian question of whether he had lost or won. There might be an objection over the accident; perhaps the injured man had not weighed in right. Betted money came closer to their hearts than the smashing up of a rider. Good boy he was if he had won!

Suddenly there showed the blaring red signal of "All right." Number two, Heros, had won. America had scored over England.

To the drone of hurrahs Baldwin was carried up to a room in the club-house. As they waited Plowden came back to Beth, saying: "Broke his leg at the Liverpool—crowded against the wing by that devil, Sandstorm. That's what I call pluck—to win with a broken leg. Rosemont is a pretty good sort—hanged if I don't think there was a tear in his eye when he came to know just what had happened."

"The doctor fixing him up in there, Plowden?" the senator asked.

"Yes, going to set the bone; and Rosemont is to run Baldwin up to the city in his machine. You can come with me, Beth, to make room."

"Couldn't I—couldn't I—help——"

"Well, senator, you come with me. Men are no good as nurses. Let Beth and Rosemont look after Baldwin in the 'mobile. I forgot about putting the Stars and Stripes on Heros, Beth."

"I'm glad you did. Where is the flag?"

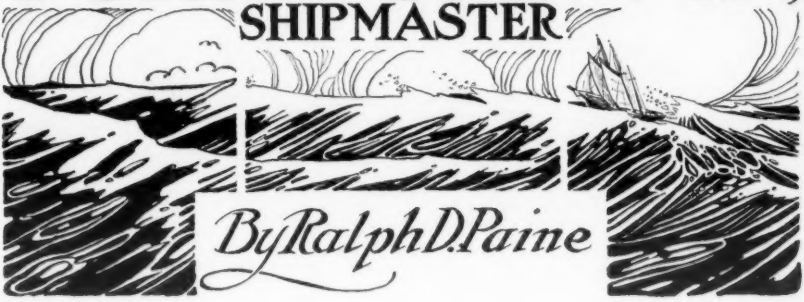
"I shoved it in Baldwin's pocket. He looked so ghastly that I thought a little fib, when it really wasn't a fib, would act as a pick-me-up—said you had sent it to him as a symbol of victory."

Plowden, turning away from the gray eyes that were disconcerting him, said: "Hello! Here comes Rosemont now. He's all right; he rode a devilish good race. I think he's a corking good loser."

"Well, Miss Beth," Rosemont said tentatively, "I thought I should have won, but that's a great horse, Heros. And I've seen plucky chaps in my time, but—hang it all, don't you know, I'm awfully sorry. It wasn't my fault, I—well, I'm glad he won after getting smashed up by Sandstorm."

Beth groped futilely for something to say. In spite of the manly ring in Rosemont's voice she saw the misery in his eyes, intensified by the tired, drawn expression in the face. She held out her hand. Rosemont caught it, adding: "Well, a fellow can't beat out Fate. I thought I had all the best of it. It's all over now but the settling. The doctor says it's just a broken bone. Baldwin's as strong as a lion, he'll soon be all right. There's a little consolation in being beaten by a man like that."

JOHN JANVIN, SHIPMASTER



I AM a very old man, the last of the shipmasters of Salem that carried deep-water vessels to Zanzibar, Manila, India and the South Seas in the brave days when we lads were gaining our commands at twenty-one. It is all dead and gone now, and when I walk as far as Derby Wharf in summer weather, the sight of the tumbling, empty warehouses that were once crammed with silks and spices, coffee, hemp, ivory and tea, makes me feel forlorn and trembly, and sometimes I choke up as if I were standing by the grave of some one I loved.

Now and then I climb as far as the old rigging-loft half way down the wharf, and sit by a window on a tar-stained bench that saw a hundred years of service. The smells of the deserted place, the look of the hewn beams that were together a little while after the Revolution, the thought of all the stout hemp rigging that was made here to stand the test of monsoon, typhoon, and hurricane on the other side of the world from Salem—these things set my mind to stirring like troubled waters as I look out to the open sea.

My memory gets unrove about some of the stories that happened to me long ago, for I shall be eighty-three years old in December. But I am going to try to write, down here in the old rigging-loft, what I recall of the wreck of the *Evening Star*. I might have used a desk at home or in the Marine Society rooms, but my rusty wits work easier here, scribbling on the blank leaves in the back of one of my old logs.

The *Evening Star*, and Rosamund Neale! For sixty years that bit of my life has been shining clear and bright among the fogs and shadows that weave in and out of your recollections when you are only waiting to slip your cable for the "desired haven" of the unchartered seas beyond. Rosamund Neale, and the master of the ship, big John Janvin with the red hair, and I, Ben Merrill—we three that loved and suffered while men died in heaps around us!

I was a passenger in the *Evening Star*, bound home to take another command after selling my vessel at Antwerp. My mate and a few of my men were with me, and we found John Janvin's ship in Liverpool, cleared for Boston. I was stowing my bullies forward when I first clapped eyes on Rosamund Neale. She was standing aft with her father, an oak figurehead of a man, grizzled and bulky and gray, and I knew him by sight as Luke Neale of Newburyport, privateersman of 1812, and a shipping-merchant with a fleet of twenty sail in the deep-water trade.

As he towered there on the quarter-deck, the scar of a British boarding-ax seaming his cheek, the girl at his side looked like a flower nestled against a boulder.

I cannot set down in words what she looked like, but when I close my eyes I can see her as if she were walking across the floor straight into my arms. When she talked her eyes and her mouth laughed as if she were happy to be living, and she looked you right in the face as if she trusted you.

Sixty years it is since I saw Rosamund Neale that day and swore I'd go through hell and blue water to make her love me. Nor was I in the least surprised at myself. It was just as if I had been waiting all my life for her to come along.

I fell into talk with her father while the crew of the *Evening Star* was making sail. He had been convoying her for a tour of the Continent, motherless she was and an only child, and they had taken passage home in this ship because John Janvin was master of her, although she was not fitted out as a packet.

I have not heard an old-time chantey sung in thirty years, but clear and strong as if it was being raised out yonder in Salem harbor, I can hear the men of the *Evening Star* singing "Shenandoah." It was a chantey that had made me feel wistful and homesick in many a port of the tropics, full of a sentiment that you could not put into speech, making you see the sweethearts waiting in coastwise towns for their sailors to come back.

The chantey-man of the *Evening Star* had a mellow voice with a thrill in every note of it. I was looking at Rosamund Neale when he got as far as:

"Shenandoah, I'll ne'er forget you."

Then the chorus swung in, lusty and true:

"Away, you rolling river."

He picked it up again, lingering on each word:

"Till I die, I'll love you ever."

And the deep-voiced refrain tailed on:

"Away, we're bound away."

There was a haunting kind of sadness in the chantey as those deep-sea bullies sang it that day, as if life was sweet but mighty uncertain. Perhaps one of those uncanny forebodings was in the air, the fear you cannot name which comes like the ghost of a whisper.

But it was with a fair wind and bright weather that the *Evening Star* put to sea. Her master was older than I, but well under thirty, a youngster nowadays, but there was nothing young about John Janvin except his face, no empty chatter, no foolishness. When he gave an order he bit off his speech as you would sheer a rope-yarn with your sheath-knife, and his men jumped when he looked their way. I was a rarely handy man in a scrimmage, I that now fear to cross the street without a hand at my elbow, but John Janvin was the better man, and I said it to myself without hard feeling as I looked him over on his own quarter-deck. Red-haired and gray-eyed he was, and deep through the chest as a rum-cask.

We were no more than two days at sea when my foolish dreams were taken all aback. The old privateersman's daughter and Captain John Janvin had known each other ashore. This, and more, was what her father gave me to understand with a haughty, hectoring kind of manner, and a note of challenge in his voice.

I could see with half an eye that his own wishes had played a part in whatever understanding there might be between Rosamund Neale and the master of the *Evening Star*. It would have been sheer mutiny for her to question the sailing-orders of this bullying father of hers. He was warning me to veer off their course, and vain and hot-headed as I was, I laughed in my sleeve and said to myself in my bunk:

"Marry her to that granite block of a man, John Janvin? She will wither and die without affection, without a man who will tell her every hour of the day how much he loves her. She is being ground between two millstones of flint and——"

Here I fetched up and swore I would cut her out from under the guns, and then cursed myself for a cur that would make love to a girl who was pledged to another man, and a fellow shipmaster at that. John Janvin would fight in the open, I knew him well enough for that, and I must meet him in the same fashion or not at all.

But of an evening when he was on duty, I found myself walking the deck with Rosamund Neale, and when he was below she and I would sometimes lean over the rail and gaze out to sea, and have no need to say what was in our hearts. For she liked me more and more, I could read it, and she was alive to my moods and thoughts as the foot of a topsail quivers in a strong wind.

It satisfied me to look at her, to know that we were dreaming along on the same course. But nothing was spoken between us that would have troubled the heart of John Janvin. Now and then I caught him staring at me with a frown, chewing his lip and running his hands through his red hair, but with no anger in his gaze. It was more as if he were grieved and puzzled, as if he were waiting for me to step up to him and explain why Rosamund Neale was so radiant in my company and so listless in his. And I had made up my mind to do this very thing, to tell him that I was his rival and that a matter of life and death lay between us.

But there were to be no more sea-born dreams aboard the *Evening Star*, no more blissful silences between Rosamund Neale and me to leeward of the deck-house. The black squall that struck us was as if the hand of God had smitten the ship to show a company of poor human souls how pitiful were their aspirations for the morrow.

It came in the middle of the night. Captain Janvin was called on deck by his mate who had roused out all hands. Thirty good seamen were trying to strip the ship of canvas before it was too late. But the *Evening Star* was fairly blown on her beam-ends before she had a chance to rally and fight for her life. She was ambushed in the black night. The wind passed, but the ship did not right.

The sea was filling the cabin as I dragged Rosamund Neale on deck, her father struggling and swearing behind us, his arms filled with clothing and blankets for the girl. We had time to save nothing else. From our warm bunks we were fairly hurled into the night, to battle amid a hideous wreckage of spars and a clamor of washing seas. Clinging to ropes' ends and whatever we could grasp on the buried deck we crawled to windward until we were hanging to the side of the ship over which the seas were making a clean breach.

We feared that John Janvin had been lost until we heard his voice booming orders to his men as he tried to muster them. I was not afraid for myself, but I realized that John Janvin was the finer man of us two, for I doubt whether I could have behaved so well in such a situation as this. Out there in the black turmoil of things he was shouting his commands with no more hurry or heat than if he had been making sail in the trade-winds of the Pacific.

But the arms of Rosamund Neale were around *my* neck, her wet face was against mine, and believing that our lives were well-nigh spent, we rejoiced in our love for each other. Was it wrong? The wings of Death were brushing us and yet we rejoiced. Yes, the happiest moments of my life were when I was clinging to the wreck of the *Evening Star* with Death the master of us all, and Rosamund Neale sobbing out her great love for me.

Daylight showed almost two score half-drowned wretches adrift on a water-logged hulk whose decks were submerged except for a little patch aft and another bit of refuge up on the forecastle-head and bowsprit. One boat had been smashed to kindling, the other and smaller was not much better off, and it seemed a hopeless task to try to patch her shattered planking.

John Janvin and I dragged Rosamund Neale to the taffrail and there penned her fast with coils and halyards

and pieces of broken deals. The master of the *Evening Star* had gone very pale and he groaned as he floundered along with me. But when I asked him how and when he had been hurt, he shook his head and was silent.

We two looked square into each other's eyes as we lingered beside Rosamund. His eyes were asking a question and he must have read the answer in mine. Strange that men should have been thinking most of a girl in such a time as this, but our love for her was stronger than the love of life.

We were all seafaring men that hung on grimly to the wreck of the *Evening Star*, and we knew how desperate was our plight. Unless we should be picked off by a miracle of good fortune, we faced the hardest way in which it is given men to die. Drifting among the splintered spars we found one barrel of water, a bag or two of bread, a drowned pig and four kegs of brandy. This was all there was to divide among us.

Most of the men were dazed, huddled in silent groups, and I helped John Janvin to stir them with kicks and curses and set some of them at work repairing the wreck of the yawl.

We fished from the sea a mizzentopgallantsail with which a little shelter was rigged to screen Rosamund from the blazing sun and to grant her some seclusion from the crew. She was never more beautiful in my sight than on this luckless day. The color had fled from her lips and cheek, and the dark shadows under her eyes were like the shadows that play in a bellying mainsail. But those dear eyes were brave and she smiled when I spoke to her.

Once as I passed close to her she seemed to be asleep, but as I halted to gaze down at her she opened her eyes and I whispered the message that meant all in all to us. She reached up and caught my hand and held it to her lips. The caress was like wine to me and I forgot my great weariness.

When I turned away Captain John Janvin was staring at me, and I waited while he clapped his heavy hand on my shoulder. Even now there was no anger in his face, and his words came no shorter or deeper than was their wont:

"Captain Ben Merrill, I think you are an honest man. As we stand in the presence of our Maker, answer me two questions and answer me fair. Do you love Rosamund Neale?"

We were two men stripped to the soul, and I gave my answer as straight as he had put his question:

"So help me God, Captain John Janvin, I love Rosamund Neale."

"Does she love you?" he asked, with a quick catch of the breath.

"Yes. She has told me so."

John Janvin looked past me out to sea, and the unspoken sadness in his face reminded me of the thoughts that had stirred in my heart when the bullies of the *Evening Star* were singing the melody of "Shenandoah." Then he said, with a sigh that made his chest heave beneath his folded arms:

"If you and I had longer to live, I would fight it out with you. I never yet struck my colors without firing a shot. But if Rosamund Neale is to die on this wreck, God forbid that I should add to her woes by the weight of a feather. I'll not interfere."

You had to know John Janvin to catch any glimpse at all of what this speech cost him. I hung back, feeling all wrong and shabby beside this lover who had stepped aside to serve his beloved.

But while this was life and death to John Janvin and me it had nothing to do with the real tragedy of the *Evening Star*. Great as was our misery through the first two days and nights, it was as naught to what was doomed to follow. Men did not begin to die until their little store of fresh water was gone. When the fourth and fifth day passed without succor those forward tapped the brandy-kegs.

Thus was the wreck turned into a floating hell. There was no slaking their torturing thirst and their brains were set ablaze. The weakest of them, to the number of five, leaped into the sea and mercifully perished. Others of the seamen left on the forecastle-head,

guessing that we had used our share of water more sparingly, swam and scrambled aft and attacked us with cries like wild beasts.

We fought them with fists and teeth and bits of plank, and wherever we were hardest pressed the red head and bare, sun-blistered shoulders of John Janvin plowed into the tangle of shrieking, gasping men. We beat them back or tossed them overside, and bloody froth marked where some of them went down for the last time.

That night those who survived of the company forward drank more brandy, and their screams were very dreadful, but they ceased before daylight which showed eight of them dead as they lay.

Three of our own men aft were dead, one of them a boy of sixteen out of Beverly. He died with his head on the breast of Rosamund Neale, and she was trying to sing a lullaby in his ear while he passed without pain or struggle. Her father was out of his mind much of the time, for the sun had touched his brain early in our sufferings, and we had bound him fast to the rail to keep him from trying to swim forward to pray among the perishing seamen. When the lad from Beverly was about to leave us, the old man came to himself and his parched and blistered lips said many tender words of Scripture, which brought us a strange comfort.

Every day John Janvin, half crippled though he was from his hurt, made his way forward and talked hopefully to the handful of raving men at the heel of the bowsprit, and tried to ease the pains of those who were nearest death. When he was away I stayed close to Rosamund Neale. It was not well to leave her unguarded.

I was delirious now and then, babbling dreams of a cottage in Salem town, with Rosamund waiting for me in the door, a dripping pitcher of cold spring-water in her hand. But I never became violent or raving, and it was the sight of John Janvin that helped me keep a grip on myself.

Thirst is a very dreadful thing to suffer, and men die hard of it. And what of Rosamund, my flower? She was a woman, it is true, and not robust at best, but she suffered least of all, because there were men who were ready to divide what they had with her. They hid water in her tent, she had a bit of bread when others starved, and she was sheltered from the wicked sun. But she was fading so fast that it was worse than death to me to see her.

One starlight night while the dying men were unusually quiet and the sea was hushed, she asked John Janvin and me to sit beside her. Her hand fluttered toward me, and I held it where she wished it to be, against my cheek. Her other hand she placed in the hand of John Janvin. Her voice was low and broken but we could hear her as she began:

"It may not be quite time to say good-by, but perhaps I will not have strength to talk to you to-morrow. John, do you forgive me for loving Captain Ben Merrill? There are no secrets among us three."

The master of the *Evening Star* tried to moisten his swollen lips but the words would not come. He took Rosamund's wasted hands between both of his and gazed long at her in the starlight. Then as a father might have caressed his child, he patted her cheek and whispered:

"I only wished you could have found him sooner, Rosamund. It is all right."

She rested her head against my shoulder and I could feel the sigh that racked her through and through as she murmured:

"I am so sorry, John. I could not help it. Do you truly forgive Ben?"

The shipmaster nodded. It was enough and she spoke next to me:

"I am yours. If not in this world, then forever and ever. But there never was a friend like John Janvin."

It was to be our last night together. After we had left the side of Rosamund, John Janvin put out his hand and I caught and held it in silence. Then he spoke with great effort:

"It is time to try the boat. I suppose you know that. Do I go, or you? One of us must stay with her."

For days this problem had been tormenting my mind whenever I was able to think at all. We had tried to patch the yawl without tools or material and our strength had given out before she was made seaworthy. The holes in her sides were plugged with the rags of our shirts, and she was bound round with ropes, but she leaked like an old straw hat, and there was the slenderest chance of keeping her afloat even with no more than four or five people in her.

To set out from the wreck in this coffin was to be adrift without food or water, with rude paddles for oars, with no more than a rag of a sail. She could be kept afloat only by continual baling which must be done by men too weak to raise their heads above the gunwale.

But there was more shipping in the sea to the southward, and the boat might possibly find and fetch help. It was one chance in ten thousand, but it was one more chance than we had on the wreck. When men are shaking loaded dice with Death the odds are of no consequence.

I read what was passing in the mind of John Janvin and made answer:

"Rosamund Neale must stay here. The wreck may yet be sighted. You have water enough to keep her alive two or three days longer. In the boat she would perish overnight. If she must die, it will be easier here. I choose the boat for myself."

"But she will want you to stay," muttered John Janvin.

"She will not know it until I am gone," I gasped.

"But the wreck has the better chance of being sighted," he continued to protest. "And help must come soon. If it does, it is better that you two live."

As I look back through the haze of sixty years, it seems as if I were writing of some one else than Ben Merrill, shipmaster of Salem. Wrongs I have committed and mistakes I have made, but I find nothing in that one chapter of my life to regret, and perhaps it has been logged in my favor up yonder. John Janvin had made one great sacrifice for me. We were as good as dead men, but I had been granted the chance to choose the harder part at the finish, and I hoped it might help to square the account that lay between him and me.

"It had better be done to-night," I told him. "The poor beggars forward will try to swim after me in daylight, and perhaps upset the yawl. I will give four of the after-guard a chance to go with me."

He had no more to say. I picked the ship's carpenter, the mate of the *Evening Star,* and two of my own seamen, the only men strong enough to make their way into the yawl. Before I tottered to the rail I crept on my hands and knees to the shelter we had made for Rosamund. She was asleep, and I kissed her hands, and I kissed her lips, and filled my eyes with the sight of her in the shadows.

Then John Janvin half dragged me to the boat. He wanted to take my place, but I fought him off, trying to strike him in the face, for my brain was again losing its bearings. Then I fell into the yawl like a lump of lead.

All through that night I was haunted by delusions that the wreck was following the yawl, wallowing along in our wake like a phantom ship.

I regained my reason with the coming of daylight and stared around us at an unbroken ring of sea. The wreck had dropped below the horizon. The yawl was half full of water and the carpenter of the *Evening Star* lay with his head under a thwart, drowned during the night because he was too weak to drag himself clear. The unspeakable torments of thirst, the red-hot sun that bit into my brain like an auger, the phantom ships that bore down on us in squadrons and vanished straight in air, these are the things I remember of that day in the sinking yawl.

But we died hard, we picked men of the *Evening Star.* My will would not suffer *me* to pass out. I was clinging to existence with both hands to fetch help to Rosamund Neale, and I well knew that on the wreck grim John Janvin was keeping alive and sane for the same reason. So smooth was the sea that our sorry craft floated when it

ought to have foundered, as if it, too, were bound to battle to the last gasp for Rosamund Neale.

It was a Yankee brig from Cadiz to Baltimore that picked us up late in the second day. Only the mate and I were left alive. I have no recollection of being taken aboard, but the master of the brig swore that in my delirium I told him where I had left the wreck of the *Evening Star,* as well as I could reckon the run of the yawl, the direction of the wind and the slant of the sun.

Of a truth mine was the voice of one who being dead yet speaketh. Stout seaman that I was in my golden youth, I rallied fast, and a few hours after being carried aboard they brought me up from below and laid me on deck; while the brig bowled to the northward with studdingsails set.

When the wreck was sighted I was conscious, but my heart was a sickening tumult of hopes and fears. It was early in the morning, and the hulk lay in a curious haze, black, shapeless, sadder than any pen could picture. A tiny cluster of dark figures forward showed some slight motion and was still again. Aft on the deck that rose from the sea the sail-cloth shelter of Rosamund gleamed pearly white. But nothing moved around it.

I closed my eyes and everything slipped from me. When I came back to life a boat was being lowered from the brig, and I waited in a dumb, dull stupor. I know not how long the boat was gone while I lay staring at the clouds. I had ceased to care about living. Rosamund Neale was dead. John Janvin was dead. And I had come too late.

The tramp of bare feet along the quarter-deck aroused me. They moved slowly as if seamen were carrying a burden to the cabin.

Presently they veered toward the companion-hatch. Between them they bore Rosamund Neale. I had no doubt that she was dead. The brig's bell struck the hour and its echoes kept tolling inside my head:

"Ros-a-mund! Ros-a-mund! Ros-a-mund!"

Then a curtain seemed to fall between me and sea and sky and I forgot my woes. A full week had passed before I found myself in a spare bunk of the brig's cabin. I dreaded to hear of a stitched hammock, a round shot for a pillow, and a burial service at sea. It was the master of the brig, a fat and cheerful man with a face like a harvest-moon, who beamed at me from the doorway and chuckled:

"She is doing well, and I'll wager she outlives you yet. She has been asking about you and getting fretful. Good symptoms, hey?"

The tears guttered down my cheeks and I could only blubber with my face in my hands. The skipper tiptoed to my bunk and stroked my hair while he rumbled in a voice like a fog-signal:

"Consider me a gay little flyaway Cupid at your service to carry messages to and fro."

He had guessed how matters stood, although I surmised that one and perhaps two castaways had been talking in their fever. But the fate of John Janvin lay very heavy on my mind and I fetched a feeble whisper:

"Where is the master of the *Evening Star?*"

"In a sailor's grave," solemnly answered the skipper as he waved an arm toward the open port beyond which the Gulf Stream danced in the sunlight.

My lips tried to frame another question, but with a warning flourish as if I had exerted myself too much the skipper lumbered from my cabin. I had heard enough. It was I who should have been permitted to make this final and supreme sacrifice. But it was fated that John Janvin should offer up not only his love but also his life.

Nor did I learn more until I was allowed to see Rosamund propped among her pillows, a beautiful ghost of the girl I had first glimpsed aboard the *Evening Star,* when the good ship was dropping down the Mersey and the chantey-man was singing "Shenandoah."

Far away as it is in time, and although I am an old man moored to life by no more than one strand of my cable,

that meeting-hour is still cherished as too sacred a thing to be spoken of even in the pages of this battered log of mine. When my sweetheart was able to tell me of the last hours aboard the wreck, she put both her hands in mine and looked straight into my eyes as was her dear habit and said:

"When I awoke and found that you had gone away in the boat, I did not want to live any longer. But John Janvin explained it all and I tried to be brave and he would not let me die. My father had ceased to rave and struggle, as you know, and next day he talked to me with such broken, yearning affection and sorrow that Captain Janvin let him come and be with me. Father said he would help take care of me, and we were short-handed after you left. And I was afraid of the other men. It is better that you do not know all. They were so hungry—and I tried to forget them."

She was staring at some horror beyond my ken, and I held her in my arms until she resumed with a shuddering sob:

"Father was his own brave self until the twilight of the second day, and I picked up heart and was sure that a vessel must be sighted soon. But after dark he fell to shouting hymns and prayers, in wild snatches without sense. He frightened me, but John Janvin soothed him and held him back from leaping into the sea. It was some time later in the night when I heard father's voice calling:

"'A sacrifice, oh Lord! A sacrifice on Thine altar! I offer myself before Thee to save the lives of this child of mine and these poor seamen!'

"John Janvin tried to save him, but he had gone to the rest he sought in the cool sea. And we two that were left sat together in the darkness, hand in hand, but until the daylight came I did not know that John Janvin was going to leave me all alone. He had been hurt, else he would have lived much longer than I, *and he had kept alive for me.*

"We saw the royals of the brig lift above the sea as the first peak of sun tipped them like a speck of cloud. She was heading for us, and John Janvin smiled at me and I understood. Then he closed his eyes, his face turned toward the brig that was coming too late to save him. I think he sighed once or twice, very peacefully, and I kissed him on the forehead. But he had gone away and left me."

"And I should have died in his stead," I faltered. "He was the better man."

She drew my face close to her and murmured through her tears:

"God never made a better friend—but I could not help loving *you.*"

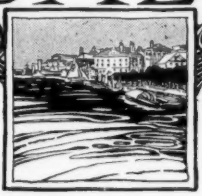
I am writing on the last leaf of the old log, and I must close the sea-stained canvas book wherein I have set down the story of a much nobler man than I. Now I must make my slow and tremulous way along the wharf toward the home that shelters Captain Ben Merrill, the last of the old shipmasters of Salem. Bless God, as soon as I shall hobble along the brick walk of our old-fashioned garden, the door will be opened and there, waiting for me, I shall see a slender woman with silvered hair whom I call Rosamund. They say that she is a very old lady, but in my eyes she is as radiant and girlish as when I first saw her on the deck of the *Evening Star,* long, long ago.

In a near-by port there is a stately home for aged seafaring men, called "The Anchorage." Set above the main doorway is a slab of rough granite in which these words are chiseled:

IN LOVING MEMORY OF JOHN JANVIN, SHIPMASTER.

The Gift of
Rosamund and Benjamin Merrill.

ST. SALOME



BY AUSTIN ADAMS

NOT that it signifies one way or the other, of course, how I came to be mixed up in one of naughty old Monsieur Blanc's little affairs of the left hand, but because my Aunt Honoria is prying over my shoulder as I write——

"You villain!" cries she. "I'm doing nothing of the sort. But really, my dear boy, for the reputation of the family, you know."

For the reputation of the family, then, since the family boasts no other possessions, I fear that it is my duty to explain. Explanations are always tiresome; nobody believes them, anyhow, or cares in the least. I like a story to begin at the beginning—of the story. The life and times of the hero's grandfather don't interest me. That's why I let Aunt Honoria do all the reading of the standard novelists, while I frequent the playhouse; our tastes differ, aunt's and mine, in several respects.

Now, this is a story. Therefore, as I say, I'd best serve my own inclinations, and keep intact the dramatic unities—of which the dear old girl never heard—by beginning at the beginning. The curtain would rise, I confess, on a scene in which I—and, by implication, the family—might not be seen in a very enviable light. Moreover, to do my aunt justice, it cannot be denied that the train of coincidences which led up to the ugly situation——

"Prove that the finger of Providence and not our questionable acquaintance with a lot of disreputable foreigners, placed an Endicott temporarily in the confidence of—of—of——"

"Of a certain exalted personage? Quite so, my dearest aunt! I was just about to put it that way, precisely. Since you desire it, I'll refer all and sundry who might be tempted to question the social and ethical correctness of an Endicott, to the finger of Providence."

"Oh, now, you can't make me think you irreverent; so do pray tell your story in your own way. Only do make it clear, Tom dear, that we were Providentially raised up, not scandalously roped in, and still less, deliberately interested, you know."

"Trust me, my dear Aunt Honoria!"

According to my aunt, the finger of Providence has had a deal to do with the family fortunes, not always, if one considers their steady diminution to the vanishing-point, in a way to foster a devout spirit. If her pious deductions are sound, Heaven will have much to account for, some day. Not to my aunt, however. She remains trustful—and provokingly proper.

Aunt Honoria may best be described as Early Victorian. Her collection of old laces and furbelows, old airs and manners, old china and morals, dates from that golden age of the proprieties. Aunt is English—very. My American birth—poor old dad married and settled out in the States—Aunt Honoria considers an accident for which I am not strictly to blame. Barring certain deplorable Americanisms in speech and what she calls "breeding," the family traditions, she is good enough to say, have not suffered greatly at my hands.

If I had been disposed to forget the fact, aunt has kept me reminded that I am now "the head of the family," a dignity, the proud old soul further reminds me, which carries with it grave responsibilities. England has always expected every Endicott—formerly of Abbot's Langley in the royal county of Bucks, and more recently of dingy lodgings and obscure *pensions* on the Continent—to do his duty.

In her own phrase, "a decayed gentlewoman," Miss Endicott has long moved—safe in the well-worn groove of social traditions capable of being neither broadened nor deflected—among a numerous and perfectly correct company of white-capped dowagers, devout spinsters, oddly mouselike half-pay widows with daughters to educate, and other like distinctly desirable females, with ancient lineage, red noses, and stubbornly uncomfortable inadaptability, all mysteriously supporting, in Dresden, a style of living on microscopic incomes which, at home, must have meant disgrace.

Since poor old dad's money troubles —he went down in the crash of 1893— and his sudden death the year after, I have roamed about Europe, making a— no, I can't say a living; managing to exist by painting rubbishy pot-boilers while waiting for leisure in which to startle the world of art with the masterpiece now unconscionably overdue. If I have a home, it is with my aunt in Dresden, where the divan in her tiny drawing-room is joyfully turned into a bed whenever I deign to bestow my presence.

Need I add, that, under all the circumstances, the family, as exclusively represented by Miss Endicott and myself, has not been in a position to affect the intimate society of the aristocracy on the Continent? I state this in order to bear out my aunt's apology; that only as the victim of a tightening chain of unavoidable accidents could I have become so compromisingly implicated in the secret schemes of so distinguished a personage as Monsieur Blanc.

Then, too, quite apart from ethical considerations, the penniless painter nephew of a palpably "decayed" maiden lady of seventy living in pinching retirement, is scarcely the sort of man to be taken into the confidence of professional caterers to the foibles of the *haute noblesse*. No. One must needs have both cash and position in order to enjoy certain unmentionable prerogatives. I have neither. Also, I happen to be a shrinking little man gone forty, who looks even older; and if in no other respects the Endicott tradition is strong within me, it manifests itself in an inherited loathing for scandal and notoriety in all their moods and tenses.

All of which, of course, has nothing whatever to do with the story; but if you knew my aunt as I do—for a very wise, no less than a very correct, old woman—you, too, would sacrifice any literary canon on the altar of the dear old girl's shrewdness and keen sense of the fit.

Briefly, then, Miss Endicott wishes it to be perfectly understood that her possibly shabby, but distinctly genteel, apartment at Reichmann-strasse, 14, *zweite étage*, Dresden, while it may not be the rendezvous of fashion, cannot by any stretch of uncharitable imagination be suspected of having harbored at any time any persons of the class which Miss Endicott, with a significant elevation of her eyebrows, styles "French."

Having thus dutifully, as I trust, made clear the purely accidental nature of our connection with this story, I now hasten to tell it without further ado.

It was late in February. I was in London, in the hope of catching the first of the spring invasion of American millionaires before their thirst for art treasures should have been slaked at the perennial fountains in Paris. Nor was my little strategy a failure. For the staggering sum of two hundred guineas each, I succeeded in disposing of a couple of canvases to a delightfully unsuspecting fellow countryman with more ready money than nice discrimination.

My first thought was, that since tomorrow was Washington's birthday I would run over to Dresden and surprise

Aunt Honoria. Not that that loyal Briton kept track of American anniversaries; but "once an American always a Yankee" is pathetically true of a poor devil like me, whose perpetual exile from God's country is due solely to the humiliating fact that mediocrity spells starvation in that land where nothing succeeds like—no, I mean, where nothing succeeds *but* success.

Quite unbeknownst, therefore, to my British aunt, I have made it a point for many years to decoy her into celebrating the glorious Fourth, Thanksgiving Day, and the other red-letter days when the Bird of Freedom stretches its wings, by arriving unheralded in Dresden, when the fatted calf is sure to be killed forthwith—in the shape of charming little *land partis*, with a whole bevy of old girls, to Pillnitz or the Bastei; of course, the opera in the evening, and a rakish little supper for two on the Terrace after.

Elated by the record-breaking appreciation of my genius, and to-morrow being, as I say, Washington's birthday, I selected a fat turkey at Hungerford Market, ransacked the most exclusive shops in Bond Street in quest of a suitable present to take to Aunt Honoria, and took train at St. Paul's, being careful to bespeak by wire an entire compartment in the sleeping-carriage, which we should pick up at Cologne.

That particular route possesses no longer for me the interest of novelty; I travel by it simply to feast my eyes on that last work possible to human genius—Cologne Cathedral.

On arriving there—always one has an hour or two—I strolled across the new plaza. It was a fine evening, the crisp cold winter air striking my face most refreshingly after the stuffiness of the train. A full moon was rising over the quaint gables of the city and beginning to tinge the vast flight of the cathedral spires with silvery sheen.

Time after time I walked entirely around the sublime pile, up at which the few passers-by vouchsafed to cast not so much as an idle glance. Never before did I realize so profoundly the loneliness of Truth and Beauty, or how high above all need of appreciation soars every great work of immortal art. I hated to quit the deserted precincts of the minister for the bustle and hurry of the railway-station, but the chiming of the half-hour in a lofty belfry warned me that I must be done dreaming.

A yellow-bearded giant in very impressive uniform, whom I knew of old for the station superintendent and whom I had named *Lohengrin*, touched his cap to me as I made my way among the jostling passengers on the platform. This excellent fellow always flattered me by abandoning his highly impressionistic English and addressing me in his own sonorous and elegant *Sud-Deutsch*. Also, in his official capacity he appeared to be empowered to bestow titles of nobility upon any of the traveling public. Me he had elevated to the peerage—of some realm—and invariably called me "baron."

"Your pardon, baron," he said, "but I believe you have compartment number seven to-night for Dresden?"

"Yes, I think that is my number; but why? Is anything amiss?" asked I in my own idea of German.

"Not at all, baron. Only there has arrived too late to obtain accommodation a certain Monsieur Blanc, an elderly gentleman, whom you might consider it an honor to oblige by surrend——"

"The devil you say!" I broke in, not wanting in respect for elderly gentlemen, I hope, but disposed of late to regard my own forty years with considerable tenderness; also, I know from bitter experience the tortures of an all-night journey in a second-class smoking-carriage, wedged in between two other sleepy but sleepless wretches.

"Most unfortunate, certainly," pleaded Lohengrin apologetically, "but perhaps your lordship willl appreciate the urgency of the situation, when I state—at the risk of losing my head, though I know you will not betray me—that this Monsieur Blanc is no other than——" And he stooped and whispered something in my ear, adding with a knowing wink when I showed my astonishment: "One of his little joy-journeys, you know, incognito!"

"Naturally, I shall feel honored if in any way I can render Monsieur Blanc a trifling service," said I, after quickly perceiving a rare opportunity and as quickly laying my plans to grasp it; "but only upon one condition."

"A condition?" gasped Lohengrin, not prepared for quite so egregious a piece of audacity, even in an American. "Wh-what is your condition?"

"Oh, merely that I myself be allowed to offer my ticket to monsieur."

"Most certainly!" chuckled Lohengrin, his Titan's beard wagging with merry relief. "This way, please!"

He led me through the surging crowd toward the door of the waiting-room. Two men were standing a little to one side, smoking cigarettes and conversing in low tones in French as they eyed the unsuspecting plebeians who elbowed past them. One—at once I knew him for Monsieur Blanc—was a youngish old man of possibly sixty-five, whose rather shabby suit of tweeds and studied air of insignificance failed to disguise the finished man of the great world, if not actually to betray the roué and bon-vivant. His companion, a vivid Frenchman with a waxed mustache and "imperial" goatee, made no effort at disguise; he was the boulevardier and dandy that his tapering wide-brimmed top-hat, his tight-waisted full-skirted frock coat and his peg-top pearl-gray trousers, proclaimed him. He wore a huge bunch of violets pinned to the satin lapel of his magnificent sable top-coat, and rolled his fresh cigarette with the tips of the fingers of his left hand, as one sees it done only by old beaus who adorned as dashing young swells the gay Paris of the third Napoleon. It was the Frenchman, not Monsieur Blanc, who showed annoyance when Lohengrin presented me.

"The Herr Superintendent informs me," I said in French, "that monsieur requires sleeping accommodations to Dresden; the train is quite engaged; luckily, I have a room—if monsieur would honor me by accepting my ticket?"

"With all my heart!" cried monsieur, grasping my trembling republican hand and speaking in excellent English. "But what shall you do, my good man—and why *do* you Americans ever attempt to speak French?"

"I shall do very well, monsieur, thank you, in the smoking-carriage," I replied—in safe English.

"Then you must do me the favor to accept these," laughed Monsieur Blanc, handing me a great handful of cigars, "and this—to-day's edition of the Paris *Herald*. It may interest you to read of the way in which your friends in New York have received Europe's latest triumph of art—the 'Salome' of Richard Strauss. Au revoir, monsieur!"

The Frenchman, who had been openly fidgeting all during the interview, now tugged at the much too democratic coat-tails of the great personage; I lifted my hat; the great personage alone returned my salute; and the two disappeared into the sleeping-carriage—forgetting to reimburse me for my surrendered compartment. Still, said I to myself, I have hobnobbed with a decided somebody—which is something, at least, to a nobody.

II.

"Aunt Honoria, just who and what was Salome?"

I was sitting, the next morning at ten o'clock, close by the heavy curtains of my aunt's bed, within which, in a gorgeously beribboned cap and frilled nighty, that elegant lady was indulging in tea, hot and strong and lots of it.

"Who was *who?*" asked aunt, pretending prettily that it was the brewing of fresh tea that prevented her hearing.

"Salome—you know, aunt, the girl in the Bible, who behaved rather badly, I believe, in some way."

Miss Endicott is mighty in the Scriptures, as her nephew is not. Indeed, it is to my disgraceful want of familiarity with the King James version that Aunt Honoria attributes my slovenly literary style and an incorrigible tendency to be skeptical about some things.

"Salome! Whatever put *her* into your naughty old head—bald enough to be better employed?"

"But would you mind telling me who she was?"

"A very undesirable young person, Salome, very, of whom the least said the better!"

"Dear me!"

Miss Endicott leaned forward, placed the tray at the foot of the bed, and then looked at me quizzically, her sharp little gray eyes screwed tight.

"Now, sir," she commanded, "will you have the goodness to give over all this mystery—as if you could pull the wool over my eyes!—and advise me what has got that immodest young baggage, Salome, into your head this morning?"

"Oh, nothing; that is, I'd really like to be told something about the misguided young creature."

"Thomas Arthur Herbert Pelham Endicott, I never discuss the morals of any young person, let alone of one who's been dead and gone these thousand years!"

My aunt never calls me by all my names except when she's in a mood to fall in with mine, whatever it may chance to be. It is the signal that her rheumatism is sufficiently dormant, and her native relish for an innocent nibble at the forbidden sufficiently keen, to permit of a certain laxity of intercourse not to be hinted at under the rigorous regimen of an active conscience—and gout.

Whereat I took heart of grace and determined to come by an accurate idea of the Biblical original of the young woman recently so adversely criticized by the virtuous opera-goers in my own strait-laced New York.

"But, my dear Aunt Honoria," said I, in defiance of the knotty finger which warned me, under pain of excommunication, not to dare to allude to the subject again, "if you don't mind, I'd really like to know something authentic about the Scriptural geisha-girl. They've been having no end of a row over her in New York, you know."

"Over Salome? In New York? Are you quite mad—or are you trying to tease your poor old aunt? Though I must say, nothing that they ever do in New York ever surprises me!"

"It's the new opera, you know; based upon the Bible story—head of poor John the Baptist on a charger—rum old party named Herod—that sort of thing. Ever heard of Strauss' new opera, aunt?"

"It's infamous! Scandalous, properly! They should never have allowed it be produced! I've attended every performance of it here—and thoroughly disapprove, thoroughly!"

"Bless me! As bad as all that?" I exclaimed, my joy as the joy of the unredeemed.

"Yes! It's a most reprehensible work, shocking in fact—you'll find the full score yonder behind my escritoire."

"Thanks!" I murmured, going over and fishing out the banned volume from among a lot of paper-backed novels which lay shamefacedly out of sight in better moments; Miss Endicott's rather too numerous Index Expurgatorius.

"But, of course, you must understand, Tom, that the shameless creature of the opera is not in the least like the unfortunate young person in the Bible narrative; not in the least!"

"No?"

"No. Strauss makes of Salome a thoroughly undesirable young woman, quite—quite—how shall I put it? Quite French, you know."

"Not really?"

"But he *does*, I tell you! Quite French, and a horrid, slimy, creepy, voluptuous reptile, to boot."

"Whereas——"

"Whereas the unfortunate girl in the Bible was more sinned against than sinning, you know."

"As all unfortunate women are, according to you!"

"And so they are, sir—at first, at any rate!"

"And later as well, wouldn't you say, when all the other women sit as a coroner's jury on the slain reputation?"

"Now, sir, none of that! If a woman is no better than she should be, however are we to keep up even a pretense of respectability, unless——"

Knowing only too well my dear aunt's

views on respectability I fear that I betrayed indifference while she stated them once more at great length; not without results, for as I turned the pages of the score her usually indefatigable tongue seemed to grow weary, her old eyes gleamed—Aunt Honoria is really a thorough musician—and presently her thin hand was stretched forth to call my attention to certain especially strong passages.

"It's wonderful, Tom, wonderful, this music; too, too awful in its power. Fancy Wagner rewriting under the influence of hashish the last act, let us say, of 'Tristan and Isolde'—and you'll have some faint conception of what 'Salome' really is!"

"So I understand. But just now it's the story which interests me; the difference, you know, between the Frenchy *danseuse* of the opera, and the—the—misguided ingénue of Holy Writ. Would you mind giving me the plot of both the diverting little novelettes?"

"Then fetch me my Bible."

Near the bed and as far as might be from the limbo of the paper-backed novels, on a shelf across the little alcove turned by the present tenant into an oratory, reposes Miss Endicott's small but very select library of devotional literature. Jeremy Taylor's spiritual classics; Law's "Serious Call"; of course "The Imitation" of Thomas à Kempis; Keble's "Christian Year"—all the sound old Anglican divines whom a Christian ought to read, mark, and inwardly digest to his soul's good; and, since Miss Endicott is extremely "High," Fénelon's "Letters to Women," St. Teresa's mystical works, and a few hand-books of piety after the somewhat effusive style of the modern Italian and Spanish confessors. Above the books hangs a steel engraving of Hunt's "Light of the World," and below, a portrait of Cardinal Newman. A tiny crucifix, flower vases, and two slim tapers complete the devotional effect.

This shrine I approached with no little reverence. It has always seemed to me a forgotten corner of an old walled garden, where have grown into full blossom the sweet old homely flowers of my dear old aunt's countless virtues and graces of heart.

"You'll find my Bible, dear boy, on the ledge of the *prie-dieu*," sang out Aunt Honoria, "and mind that you drop nothing out of it!"

There are Bibles and Bibles. Aunt Honoria's is her own. It is a large "Oxford," with flexible cover whose ample edges fall over the sides. And how it bulges! Indeed, my interest in aunt's Bible centers not, I confess, in what is contained in its pages, but rather in what the lengthening years have laid away between the pages. Easter cards of twenty years ago; obituary notices of many an old friend; pinches of yellow dust which were once flowers laid on dear dead; and—what I can never see without emotion—a book-marker wrought by my own hands in some prehistoric day of innocence. It is made of perforated pasteboard sewn on a faded ribbon, with "Blessed are the Pure in Heart" embroidered upon it; and an angular "1875" in the corner.

"But, my dear aunt," I protested, when with the unction of an archdeacon murmuring "Here endeth the second lesson," she closed the book, "if that is all that the inspired narrative has to say of her, that poor girl has been grossly maligned, she has really. As far as we have any warrant for judging, it would seem that, however naughty her mama may have been, Saint Salome was merely a——"

"*Saint*, you say?" cried aunt, glaring at me.

"Yes—why not? Surely, a girl may be considered innocent until proven otherwise?"

"Granted, Tom, but a saint dancing? Never!"

"We read that David danced before the Lord, do we not? And what about Saint Vitus?"

"They were men; I had in mind only females."

Terpsichore was on the tip of my tongue, but just in the nick of time I bethought me that she was a mere pagan muse not in the orthodox Calendar; and so spared my aunt's feelings and my reputation as a classical scholar.

"Well, saint or no saint," I went on, "I confess to a feeling of unmixed pity for Miss Salome, whose only recorded indiscretion seems to have been in an unfortunate selection of a mama."

"The shameless chit danced one of those scandalous Oriental dances in order to excite the lust of a monster—to say nothing of her later demanding the head of the Baptist as a reward for her immodest goings on! Perhaps, sir, you will think all *that* consistent with sanctity!"

"It's the opera and not the Bible that has made you so hard on my new little patron saint—I say saint, for I have decided to canonize Salome on my own account."

"Rubbish! And now trot away, dear boy, for it's high time I was up. Off with you!"

"Oh, but I say, you know, aunt, what's to do to-night? We should make merry, you know, in some fashion—over the prodigal's return with a purse full of giddy sovereigns, you know. Wassail and song—Oh, landlord, fill the flowing bowl!—that sort of thing, eh?"

"Never fear, you ungrateful boy! Where's your memory? Did I ever fail to celebrate your home-coming? Directly I got your telegram last night, I sent out the invitations for a charming little party."

"Awfully good of you! Who's to come?"

"The poor dear Miss Boppses of course."

(Recently orphaned; daughters of the late missionary bishop of somewhere; very serious; very angular; aged anywhere from forty-five to sixty.)

"Charmed—and?"

"And poor dear Mrs. Marriot-Tooth."

(Recently widowed; relict of the late Lieutenant-Colonel Marriot-Tooth; ear-trumpet; inconsolable; half-pay; goes in for botany and mothers' meetings.)

"Delighted—and?"

"And poor dearest Lady Anastasia."

(Recently bereaved—of the big annuity which her nephew, the reigning earl, used to allow her until he came a smashing cropper on the turf; packed off to starve in Dresden; turning sour; no end of a snob, poor dearest Anastasia.)

"We *shall* be a jolly party, sha'n't we just?" I lied dutifully, anticipations of a whole evening of poor dears, black-bordered handkerchiefs, sniffing, obituary reminiscences, improving conversation, and continuous tea, weighing heavy on my devoted soul.

"Your always diverting talk, dear boy, will be sure to hearten the poor dear souls a bit—so you won't mind, will you?"

For answer, I kissed the dear old kind eyes that sought forgiveness of my own.

"And the ladies will be dining as well?"

"No; only to tea, at half after four. There's the opera in the evening, you know."

"The opera? I thought you wrote that they are doing only those flippant Italian things now?"

"So I did, but I'd quite forgotten to tell you—I'll be forgetting my catechism at this rate!—that the king has commanded a special performance this evening. You're really most fortunate, Tom dear, for it is to be the only gala night before Lent—the king, of course, and other royalties—society en masse—the best cast and redoubled orchestra—everything very smart—in short,' *the* performance of the season! Come, sir, how's that?"

"Stupenjious! And what opera are they giving?"

Aunt Honoria looked up at me coyly, coughed, sat up, coughed again, and actually went crimson.

"Why, 'Salome,' of course!—How dare you stand there and laugh at your old aunt, sir? Come, now, be off, for I'm going to dress!"

I fled.

III.

The day proved wet. Long before she made the announcement, I foresaw that damp would mean twinges of rheumatism, and twinges of rheumatism invariably give Aunt Honoria twinges of conscience.

"On the whole, dear boy, if you don't

mind, I'll stop at home to-night, for I really feel that one should not set a bad example by being seen too often, you know, at such a performance."

So I went alone. I went early. The box-office was besieged by a great crowd demanding tickets which were not to be had. I readily exchanged my aunt's two stalls for a place in the corner of the "bachelor's box," close to the stage, and whence I got an excellent view of the entire house.

Unlike my aunt, I am so ignorant of the technicalities of music that I always enjoy it. An opera is frequently an occasion of keen torture to her; never to me; wherein I find consolation for my want of education.

What I had read in the newspaper which Monsieur Blanc gave me, and my diverting interview with Aunt Honoria, quite naturally filled me with even more than usual zest for the performance of that evening. Resolutely did I set myself to ignore the brilliant audience and to give my undivided attention to the masterpiece of Strauss, which, it seemed, had stirred two continents—differently.

Not even when the house rose to salute the king and the court upon their entering the royal box did I so much as turn my head, and by the time the overture was half done I was completely under the spell of the weird music. Never shall I forget my first hearing of the opening act; never before had music so utterly mastered my emotions. The indescribable dissonances thrilling one with their nameless desires and regrets and aspirations; the startling surprises and bold departures defying every canon of orthodox composition; the wild passions and shuddering lust and stammering half-cries; and, above all, the subtle, insidious, seductive, irresistible suggestion underlying every bar—all, all was beyond belief, supremely erotic.

It was as though Music had suddenly cast aside her ancient disguise of sanctity and stood forth, nude, brazen, expectant, quivering with desire. And before her fierce ardor of fleshly appetite no man's will, were it an anchorite's, but must bend and succumb like a water-rush before the March gale. I knew not whether to blush—for humanity, for the countless pure women about me—or to snatch the fairest among them and together fling ourselves into the vortex of delirious delight.

It was with infinite relief, therefore, that I saw the curtain drop on the first act, and, as did everybody, I turned my attention to the house. My first thought was of the "*fremden loge*," the commodious box next to the king's, where are seated notables, the guests of the court from other countries.

I felt morally certain that there I would behold my friend Monsieur Blanc. His allusion to the article in the newspaper, concerning "Salome," would seem to indicate that he had traveled to Dresden to attend this performance; nor would he be likely to do so incog. But no Monsieur Blanc was to be seen in the "*fremden loge*." Only two exalted personages appeared in the box—their Serene Highnesses of Saxe-Meinigen-Nassau-Fingstenberg-Strellitz.

At all events, that's what the usher told me they were; and I hadn't the face to ask him to spell it or to write it out for me. His Serene Highness was a weazened little old man with weak eyes and flaxen hair cropped short like a convict's, save for a bristling pompadour. Her Serene Highness—an enormous creature, fat and as phlegmatic as an oyster—seemed to have all the serenity and highness of the family. They interested me not at all, so my eyes passed on around the horseshoe.

No more did the royal box attract more than a transient glance from me. I had known the Saxon court from the days of "good" King Albert; his reigning nephew never did loom large in the fierce white light that beats upon a throne; although, I must confess, the sight of the luckless young fellow sitting queenless in his box did touch me, since all the world knows why he must evermore sit queenless. So my eye passed on from box to box and gradually condescended to notice the commonalty in my own lower tier. It was then that something occurred which turned

that night's opera into a vital chapter in this story—and of my life.

In the box directly opposite to mine I saw the Frenchman who had accompanied Monsieur Blanc at the station in Cologne on the previous evening. Now that I saw him without his hat I was instantly struck by his almost ludicrous resemblance to the traditional *Mephistopheles* of "Faust." Every detail was perfect; the arched eyebrows, the pointed ears; the goatee and feline mustache; the sinister leer and look of cunning.

To heighten the impression, monsieur sported a gorgeous decoration in the shape of a wide scarlet ribbon worn diagonally across the bulging expanse of plaited shirt-front. I almost fancied, when he joked with his three friends, that I could hear the dry, hollow, hellish "Ha! ha! ha!" as every basso I ever heard, from Galassi to Edouard de Reszke, laughed it.

Moreover, after once seeing "Mephisto," as I at once dubbed him, I could not shake off the fascination he exerted over me. When he rose and left his box I did the same and hurried around the foyer to get a closer look at him.

Up the grand stairs I pursued him and reached the top just in time to see him approach a stout woman in black and diamonds, with whom he conversed earnestly for several minutes. From my safe corner I watched, not at all knowing why.

Presently the woman left him and went into a box, whence she returned after a moment, leading a tall girl—an American, I could have sworn at the first glimpse of her—dressed in the simplest possible white muslin gown and without a jewel of any sort about her person.

The elder woman knocked at the door of another box—the third to the left of the *"fremden loge"*—and after a brief parley with the gentleman who opened the door the girl alone was admitted. Then the liveried attendants warned everybody that it was time to return to our places, and with the rest I found my way back to mine.

I tried to banish from my mind all that had distracted me during the intermission; but it was of no use. While pretending to myself that I was listening to the music, I kept looking across at Mephisto and thence, following his bad eye, up at the box into which I had seen the American girl disappear. She had been given much the best seat in their box by her new hosts, a nice little lady and her nice little husband, who were quiet enough to be English and so frankly and intelligently enjoying the music that I knew they must be—well, anything but English. But, oh, the girl!

Fresh as a morning in May and as pure and sweet, she sat in her simple white gown among the gemmed and powdered and painted and faded and jaded women of the grand world, peerless, a queen. Now that I could study her, I was able to analyze the causes that had made me start with admiration when I got the instant's glimpse of her in the foyer.

Not weak enough to be merely pretty, the young face appealed to the artist in me by its splendid nobility and a certain quality of virginal beauty. Her look as she faced the increasing number of people who stared at her was the challenge of innocence flung unknowingly into the very teeth of the wisdom which is death. High rose her head above a neck and shoulders which any other woman along the blazing semicircle would have given her tiara to possess.

And what hair! A great mass of chestnut with a glint of red gold here and there as she turned her head, and all piled in bewitching impromptu confusion, worlds lovelier than the slick geometrical pomaded coiffures of the rest, which had entailed an hour in a straight-backed chair under the expensive hands of a hair-dresser—and which, on my word as a portrait-painter, looked like bought wigs on two-thirds of the women. Yes, my little American ingénue was *the* rare jewel in all that oriflamme of splendor.

Nor was I the only one who seemed to appreciate the fact that the gods had sent us something out of the common in this wondrous girl with her unspoiled

charms. Mephisto never once took his lascivious eyes from her, while now and again I caught some man nudging another, when both would look up at her—to my no little disgust, strange to say, since I was the worst offender of them all.

My girl listened to the music with such evident failure to comprehend its purport that my early anxiety on that score soon gave place to pleasant reflections upon the fact that it is not, after all, such a pity that Americans can so thoroughly enjoy Europe without having the faintest notion as to what it's all about.

But suddenly my complacent feelings were changed into the liveliest curiosity and, the next moment, the keenest distress. My girl dropped her fan into the adjoining box—she had been resting her exquisitely rounded arm on the velvet-cushioned dividing rail—and a gentleman, until then hidden behind the drapery, stooped and picked it up for her. As he handed it to her I was quick to observe the almost brutal frankness with which he made the discovery that he was sitting close to so beautiful a woman.

She moved her lips in thanks; he pulled his chair forward so as to be able to stare at her at his will; and then, a satyr's smile on his sensual wrinkled little old face, he settled down to gloat over her. With infamous affrontery he went so far as to lay the tips of his fingers on the rail within an inch of her gleaming bare shoulder.

The next moment he turned his face, and I recognized him. It was Monsieur Blanc.

Had I not heard "Salome" many times since, I could give but a scant account of the last two acts. Quite preposterously, but none the less swiftly, my mind hurried from one ugly conclusion to the next, until I had evolved an unbroken chain of circumstantial evidence.

I had it all! The whispered conference between Mephisto and his female accomplice; the mysterious way in which they had inveigled the girl into that particular box; the presence of the notorious royal roué, Monsieur Blanc, in the adjoining box—what did it all mean? What could it mean, but that my girl was about to be made the victim of an infamous conspiracy?

Yes, up in that box another Salome was being used as a bait wherewith to tempt the jaded appetite of a monster—and fatten the purse of a villainous French go-between! And I instantly rushed to the mad conclusion that I must do what I might to save her!

"Whose box is that?" I asked of a German sitting by me and who had given me much pleasant gossip of the notables present; "the fourth one to the left of his majesty's, where the girl in white is?"

"Ah, that is the box of the Freiherr Graf von Bumpf. And the fräulein, is she not *wie eine blume?*"

Thank heaven, the performance came to an end at last! Mephisto left his lair a few moments before the final curtain; and I, also, was in the lobby before the rush.

It's a great show, a gala night, when everybody crowds about the grand entrance to look at the royalties take carriage. The flaring torches held by the footmen in their fawn-colored livery; the high and mighty ladies with beefy red arms and glittering coronets and ancestral ropes of pearls and rubies and diamonds about their ample necks; and the consumptive-looking princes who would seem a sorry lot, were they not of the blood royal. It is all very solemn, very—amusing!

I stared with the rest, and then, after the last carriage had glided away, I lit my cigar and stood looking over at the broken roof-line of the palace and court-church in the moonlight. As I was about to saunter forth into the open square I noticed a man who hurried out of the theater. It was Monsieur Blanc, alone and afoot, and hence acting in a way to establish my worst fears.

Thinking to follow him, I waited in the shadow of the porte-cochère until he was well across the plaza. They were shutting the great folding-doors now, and as I turned to look at them, a woman ran down the steps. It was my girl,

and she was manifestly agitated, almost hysterical, in fact. She stood as if uncertain what to do, until she caught sight of me.

"Oh, sir, would you mind seeing if you can find a droschke for me? I got separated from my chaperon in some way, and she evidently thinks that I am with friends."

That settled it! Providence had given me just the opportunity I longed for, to save her! Assuring her that I'd fetch a cab in a moment, I tore across the square, flinging a mute curse at Monsieur Blanc as I passed him, and was back in a belated droschke at once. It was all only too clear. They had contrived to leave the unhappy child to the tender mercies of Blanc; he had insulted her; and my glorious Saint Salome had scorned him! The blood of all the Endicotts leaped to my heart. I seemed to see the dear old face of Aunt Honoria smiling down at me from above.

"It's awfully embarrassing," blurted out Saint Salome in her frank American way as I handed her into the cab, "but I haven't a cent with me. Would you mind paying the driver?"

"A privilege, I assure you," replied I, more truthfully than such statements are usually made. "And now to what address shall I direct him to take you?"

"If he'll set me down at the foot of Christian-strasse I'll run up to the house all right. But, please, aren't you coming along? I'm fearfully nervous—so late, you know."

She had paid me the compliment of my life. We scarcely spoke during the too few minutes that it took the driver to reach the foot of Christian-strasse. She pulled off her long white gloves and handed them to me while she put on some dark ones, trembling the while.

Building my hopes of meeting her again in a regular way on my protest against her intention to walk to her door from the corner, I suppressed the impulse to try to learn who she was. But she insisted upon being left where she had said, and I drove home in ignorance and quite the most unhappy frame of mine.

IV.

I awoke the next morning with a feeling of impending troubles. I had given Aunt Honoria a dozen reasons why I must hurry away by the noon train, and now, of course, I should have to stop in Dresden the Lord alone knew how long, for it was out of the question that I could leave until I had found the girl's people and—in some as yet unthinkable way—advised them of the true state of affairs.

Over my little breakfast, eaten alone, I was able at least to formulate one definite line of action and to reach one certain conclusion—Aunt Honoria must not discover my real reason for remaining in Dresden, if I had to lie unblushingly to the good old soul. Yes, aunt must be kept in blissful ignorance.

"Tom!"

"Aunt?"

"Come here, sir!"

I was trying to slip out of the house, when she heard me in the passage and sang out to me from bed. There was no mistaking her tone; I was summoned to the bar to plead to some serious charge.

"Sit down, sir!"

I drew a chair close to the bed.

"Tom, you need a new Inverness coat."

"I need so many things, dear aunt," said I, the general proposition being both true and affording me time in which to endeavor to divine her whim. My shabby Inverness lay across her knees and her quaint old housewife on the pillow beside her. A darning-needle gleamed in her rheumatic old fingers.

"You do indeed need many things—which you could very well have, if you didn't fetch your old aunt a sinfully costly gift every time you dispose of a picture. I shall not permit it hereafter!"

"And so deprive me of my only dissipation?"

"Oh, you're hopeless—God bless you, boy! But really, Tom, this coat is not fit! It's quite too disreputable, even for you! Just look at the holes I've darned already—I do wish you'd recollect that

the moths have a fancy for wool—and no end of others still to do!"

"Only over my dead body!" I cried, snatching the coat and tossing it far across the room. "I'll get another one directly I reach London, for I sha'n't have you ruining your eyes, and your angelic temper, over me, ma'am! Especially your temper, which, if you'll pardon me, seems to be not of the sweetest this morning."

"And well it mayn't be, sir! With you deceiving me in this shameful fashion!"

"Deceiving you, Aunt Honoria?"

"Shamefully! Scandalously! And I forever begging you to confide in me!"

"I really haven't the remotest idea of what you are driving at."

"Oh, no, of course not! None so innocent as those who couldn't spell innocence if their lives depended on it! Tom!"

"Ma'am?"

"Look at this, sir!"

She drew a long white kid glove from under her pillows and held it dangling before my guilty eyes. I clutched at it, but she was too quick for me.

"What is this, sir?" demanded my aunt, very serious and continuing to dangle the incriminating glove close to my face. "If you will have the goodness to advise me what this is I shall be obliged to you."

"Why, it's a g-g-glove, isn't it?"

"It is, sir; a female's glove, sir!"

"Where on earth could it have come from, aunt?"

"From where this one also came, no doubt. Oh, you will imagine that I'm blind, will you, you conscienceless rogue you!"

She drew as she spoke another long white kid glove from under the pillows.

"Another?"

"Yes, sir, two! *Two*, Tom! Two shameless female gloves, sir. Two! Not merely one, but two!"

"Gloves frequently come in pairs, do they not, dear aunt?" I stammered, for the first time in my life realizing why a drowning man clutches so frantically—and foolishly?—at any straw.

"Granting, for the sake of the argument, that they do sometimes come in pairs, will you, sir, now have the monumental audacity to inform me that these particular gloves came into the pocket of your Inverness by accident?"

"If you would only let me examine them, Aunt Honoria, I might better be able to determine just how these particular gloves ever managed to come into my possession, though of course I can't imagine how any such thing could have happened."

"Oh, of course not!"

Aunt held out the wretched gloves and I examined them with minute care and—little did she dream how much—with tenderness as well. As I took hold of one of the gloves I seemed to feel the thrill I could well fancy I would have felt had Saint Salome's hand been within it; and also I felt something hard, as it might be a coin or a ring. Both feelings I was careful to hide from my aunt's eagle eye.

"Well, sir," she demanded after I had carried the little farce as far as she had a mind to let it go, "has your critical examination enabled you to recall the disgraceful occasion—it now appears that such occasions are frequent—when you got these gloves?"

"It must have been last night, I fear," I laughed, adroitly slipping the gloves into my pocket unobserved by my aunt; and planning to make my escape at the earliest possible moment for the purpose of learning whatever the hard thing in one of them might be.

"Last night, eh? And yet you gave me to understand that under no circumstances would you take a lady—except, of course, your old aunt—to witness 'Salome.' Would you mind telling me, sir, if you have been deceiving me all these years, and this sort of thing is going on constantly?"

Naturally, from the moment I first caught sight of the telltale glove in aunt's hand I realized that my determination not to let her know anything of the events of the preceding night must be abandoned. She must know—all. After a momentary feeling of indefinite regret, I accepted the inevitable with

considerable relief; with entire satisfaction, in fact.

In the very likely event of my having to remain a number of days in Dresden, and in the still more certain prospect of my having goodness only could tell what difficulty in ascertaining who and what Saint Salome's people were and how best to meet the delicate situation, I realized that it would be next to impossible to act without arousing my aunt's curiosity. This, I now felt, would be worse than unnecessary; it would be foolish, for I knew Aunt Honoria for the wisest and most resourceful of good women. Her tact, her fine sense of the fit, her very age and unmistakable character, might, nay, would be of the greatest use to me in the solution of the embarrassingly unique situation in which I found myself.

Accordingly, while we were yet enjoying our little play over the compromising gloves, I had already made up my mind to take the dear old campaigner into my unreserved confidence.

I told my story as simply as I could. Aunt Honoria's face was a study as the plot deepened and I came to the description of the girl's exquisite purity and sweetness. Long before I was done, I thanked heaven that I had forgotten to return those blessed gloves to her when the girl had got out of the droschke at the foot of her street. Had I done so, my aunt might never have heard the story—nor I thus happily secured her help.

"And now what's to be done—the poor child, how my heart goes out to her!—so that we may learn the address of her people?" asked my aunt after she had spoken her very decided mind about sundry social conditions on the Continent.

"That's the question—what?"

"But surely, Tom, since this infamous Monsieur Blanc is who he is, it will be possible to discover his whereabouts?"

"A king incog, my dear Aunt Honoria, is not so easily unmasked. Then, too, mightn't it be rather dangerous for us to insinuate that his majesty was pursuing our little saint, on nothing more tangible in the way of evidence than that I saw him pick up her fan?"

"There's his reputation—the worst in Europe!" argued aunt, the ribbons on her cap bobbing convincingly.

"Yes, and there's the divinity that doth hedge about a king, Aunt Honoria. Public policy, if no loftier consideration, prevents the press and public opinion from exposing the peccadillos of royalty."

"That is only too true. But, surely, at the faintest whisper of exposure he would desist. I'm for giving his majesty to understand that his intentions toward this unhappy girl are suspected. Believe me, he would quit Dresden by the next train!"

"I doubt it. My own mind is, that that villainous Frenchman, who appears to be the king's secret agent, and the fat woman of whom I told you, are much too skilled in their fiendish arts to be baffled by an anonymous threat. No; the girl, no doubt, has people here, and it is they whom we must find."

"But how?"

"That's it—how?"

"With what sort of people was she last night? The boxes in that tier belong to well-known members of society. In whose *loge* did she sit?"

"That's the ticket!" I exclaimed, jumping up and giving aunt an approving slap on the shoulder. "As I told you, she was decoyed by some means into the fourth box to the left of the royalties, which, it seems, belongs to the Freiherr Graf von Bumpf."

"Who?"

"Graf von Bumpf, whoever he may be."

"What extraordinary names these foreigners persist in having! But that's neither here nor there. It should not be difficult to hunt up this Graf von—whatever did you say his ridiculous name is?"

"Bumpf."

"Absurd, is it not? This Graf von Bumpf, as I was about to say, and then to ask him who the——"

"Oh, you're on terms of familiar ac-

quaintance with the Saxon nobility, are you, aunt?"

"You know I'm no such a thing! But there's dearest Lady Anastasia; she doubtless has the entrée at the Bump—I shall never get that extraordinary name right!"

I smiled. Lady Anastasia Crewe, the bright particular star in the galaxy of indigent spinsters in which Miss Endicott herself was no inconspicuous ornament, was a perpetual source of joy to me. The aunt of a belted earl in the peerage of Ireland, and a personage in her own right, dearest Anastasia towered like a mighty rock of security above the barren land of genteel quarterly remittance obscurity from whose bourne no dear gentle old traveler ever returns to England—except to be laid under the gnarled yews in the family churchyard close by the gates of the park, above whose tree-tops rise the battlements, or gables, or just the humble chimney-stacks, of the old home.

With the Lady Anastasia in their midst not even the most exclusive nobility of their land of exile could ignore the claims or deny the standing of Miss Endicott's equally exclusive little coterie.

True, since the nephew-earl's reverses on the turf, poor dearest Anastasia had been obliged to board at a strictly economical—but also strictly genteel—*pension* in a dreary little street just off the Bismarck Platz; but from even that coign of disadvantage her indisputable social influence might be exerted. It might be exerted even to the length of securing an introduction to the Graf von Bumpfs.

"Try it by all means, my dear auntie. It is not at all impossible that her ladyship already knows the graf, or at least the gräfin; and if by any chance she does not happen to know them personally, she of course knows no end of people who do."

"Depend upon it, Tom, Lady Anastasia is our only hope. I shall write her immediately begging her to honor me by dropping in for luncheon, for of course we must lose no time, must we?"

"Not an instant!"

So it was arranged that we were to meet at noon for a council of war; and I—in the last stages of acute curiosity to know what could possibly be in the glove—retreated into the drawing-room. With a hand none too steady I took the gloves out of my pocket and felt for the hard whatever it was in one of them. Then I gently shook the glove, holding it by the end of one of the fingers.

A ring dropped into my hand. It was a magnificent one, a great diamond set between a ruby and a sapphire, three superb stones. I turned the beautiful trinket this way and that in the palm of my hand. A queer feeling of—no, of course it was not exactly sadness, drifting like the shadow of a lost something through my mind. No fool like an old fool; unless it be a middle-aged one of, say, forty. If ever a gold band spelled "engaged," then this ring spelled it.

V.

Not at all as confident as Aunt Honoria that in Lady Anastasia we could count upon finding the open-sesame to the acquaintance of the Von Bumpfs, I set out to make some preliminary efforts on my own account.

The gloves had cheered me. It would be entirely natural and proper that the finder of even so trifling an article would attempt to discover the address of the owner. But if the gloves had thus afforded me a plausible ground for endeavoring to learn the name and whereabouts of Saint Salome, the finding of the ring left me absolutely no choice in the matter. I must exhaust every means of discovering her, or else subject myself to the inevitable suspicion of having robbed her while pretending to protect.

In the innocence of her heart, and under the nervous excitement of finding herself alone in the streets at midnight, the girl had trusted a stranger; and he had coolly proceeded to keep the costly ring which she had asked him to hold for a moment. It looked ugly.

In my uncertainty as to where to turn it occurred to me that the American

consul might very likely be able to furnish me an introduction to somebody or other through whom I could approach the Graf von Bumpf. I had not met the newly arrived consul, but that did not signify; I could readily establish the fact of my responsibility; and, anyhow, what American but has a claim upon the good offices of his government?

Accordingly, I made my way to the consulate, over whose portal hung the escutcheon of the free, the invincible Eagle supported by Old Glory on either side, and "*E Pluribus Unum*" emblazoned on a scroll below.

Mr. Patrick Coogan was in his office and effusively cordial. It required no very keen insight to fathom the causes operating in the evolution of an underbred Tammany Democrat into an appointee to an important foreign post under a Republican administration. I could quite readily comprehend it all. Coogan was not the sort of man to fail to see which way the wind was blowing the ripe plums of place. A sudden change of political faith; an interview with certain astute ecclesiastics prudently engaged in bringing about the formerly unheard-of type, the Irish Republican; a liberal use of Celtic adulation of the right people—and the trick was turned.

"Ah, what are ye givin' us?" laughed Mr. Coogan, when I introduced myself. "Sure, you're not an Amurrican, are you, honest? Annybody'd take you for a Britisher, dontcherknow. Say, on the level, are you givin' me the straight goods? Then shake!"

I shook.

"And now, Mr. Indicott, what can I be after doin' fer you? I'm in the business of puttin' ivery wan from God's country nixt to whativer they wants, see?"

I explained that I wished very much to be put in touch with some one who could introduce me to the Graf von Bumpf.

"Hully gee! Me name ain't Buttinski, and I ain't on speakin' terms wid his nibs Von Bumpf; but I guess I can connect, all right, all right."

"You really think you can?"

"Sure t'ing! Give me till this afternoon, and I'll get a move on right away quick, and it'll be tickled to death I'll be if I can be of service to you. Niver moind the t'anks, Mr. Indicott. And moind that you call ag'in soon."

I left him and spent a pleasant enough hour in "bummeling" up and down the Prager, a diversion never to be denied to oneself in Dresden and never wanting in human interest. As I was about to pass under the archway at the end of the street, thinking to drop into the Zwinger Gallery for just a look at *the* Raphael, I heard a hearty voice calling out my name. I turned and saw Coogan running after me, waving an envelope to me as he came.

"And here it is! The viry t'ing! As foine a litter as annywan could wish, from th' English consul, introjucin' you to—to—what the divil's th' auld guy's name?"

In ten minutes I was at the door of the graf's palace, somewhere back of the Kreuze Kirche; and in another minute I was in the presence of the affable graf himself.

"Ah, but the gräfin and I were not present last night. We loaned our box to some very charming American friends, a Mr. Forbes and his good wife."

As soon as I could do so without rudeness, I took my departure from the delightful little man—he had put his box at my disposal for the next performance of "Salome"—and hurried to the Europäischerhof, where, the graf told me, I would find Mr. Forbes.

Armed with Graf von Bumpf's card, I had no difficulty in obtaining an interview with the nice little man and his nice little wife, whose appearance and the way they listened to the music had impressed me so favorably the night before.

"But dear me!" cried Mrs. Forbes when I had explained my mission, "I'm really afraid that we can't help you. You see, the girl—how perfectly lovely and sweet she was, was she not?—was not an acquaintance of ours. No. It appears that her chaperon—one of these good motherly souls who take charge of

a whole flock of girls who are studying here—was unable to get enough places for her pretty brood, and seeing that our box was almost empty she did us the kindness to come and ask us to let the dear girl sit with us."

"And you did not even learn the young lady's name?" asked I anxiously.

"No—most unfortunately, we felt as soon as we reached home and began to talk about her. But, you know, Mr. Endicott, many little social matters are much more strictly observed over here than in America; so we hesitated to ask the child who she was, since her chaperon had seen fit not to present her in the usual way. I'm so sorry!"

"And the chaperon—you do not know who she was, either?"

"Alas, no."

That seemed to write "No Thoroughfare" in this direction; so, after chatting a few minutes, I rose to go.

"No, but what's your hurry?" exclaimed Mr. Forbes, taking a box of cigars from the table and holding it out toward me. "Do stop and smoke a cigar while we talk over the opera. Tremendous, wasn't it?"

"Or better," chirped up Mrs. Forbes, "while we talk America. It does one good to meet Americans over here—of the right sort, that is. You are of the Massachusetts family?"

"Only remotely related, I fear. As far as I have been able to trace my ancestry, the Massachusetts branch and ours do not commingle this side of Adam," I laughed; and we settled back in our chairs right chummily for a long gossip.

One thing led to another, until some chance remark of mine led to the discovery that among the innumerable mutual friends which we found that we had was my old roommate at Harvard, "Nick" Bleecker, now a decidedly prosperous banker in Wall Street. It even transpired that—now that they came to think of it—the Forbeses remembered having met me once, when they visited Bleecker at Cambridge.

"And I wonder if you recollect Nick's brother Morris?" asked Mrs. Forbes.

"Perfectly; we used to call him the Cowboy Kid. A terror, if ever there was one! But, let's see, Morris must have cut his wisdom-teeth by this time; he must be all of thirty. How time does *fugit!*"

"How delightful, is it not, Delano, to hear Mr. Endicott talk of all those old friends?" merrily said Mrs. Forbes, with a little clapping of her little white hands. "And what do you think, Mr. Endicott? Morris Bleecker is in Dresden now!"

"Not really? Where? It will be good for sore eyes to see the Kid once more."

"And what's more, he's over here on the most romantic of missions. His fiancée has been studying art here this winter, and they are to be married directly after Easter."

"And who is the happy girl?" I asked eagerly.

"She's a Miss Lee, of Baltimore. We haven't met her, but I understand that she is a rare beauty and, of course, all that one could wish in the way of social position and all that."

"I shall hope to meet her as soon as I hunt up the Kid. Are her people with her? And where does she live here?"

"That I can't say. All that I know is, that Miss Lee is under the care of one of those chaperons of whom we were speaking a moment ago—that's why we've missed meeting her at any of the receptions and dinners at which we have been present. These chaperoned girls here might almost as well be in a convent; strict is not the word."

"Winthrop tells me," put in Mr. Forbes, "that Miss Lee was at the opera last night; he saw her after the performance standing with an elderly gentleman who appeared to be urging her to do something that she did not wish to do."

"And, do you know," added Mrs. Forbes, "that I've allowed myself to imagine that the girl in our box may have been she?"

I instantly did more than allow myself to imagine the same thing. Indeed, so sure was I that Saint Salome was of course no other than Miss Lee, that I scarcely heard whatever else my hosts

may have said to me before I rushed away fairly tortured by—what?

It was all too maddeningly clear! The chaperon was, of course, the woman in black with diamonds; the elderly man was Monsieur Blanc; the ring in my waistcoat pocket was the one the Kid had given her when they became betrothed; my little Saint Salome was to be married at Easter—and no fool like an old fool, except me!

I tore home. I must see Aunt Honoria before she could take Lady Anastasia—a waspish gossip—into our confidence. And to do this I must hurry.

Alas! As I let myself into my aunt's apartment I heard her and Lady Anastasia talking in the drawing-room; nor could I induce aunt to pay the slightest heed to the signals of distress which I flew at my peak. Usually too quick to detect a hint or any little piece of drawing-room strategy, Aunt Honoria now, of all times, persisted in ignoring my brazenly frank signs, even when I went and stood in the passage and implored her with my eyes and outstretched arms to come to me for a moment.

But my fears proved unwarranted. Luncheon passed without so much as a distant allusion to the subject of the Von Bumpfs. While, it is true, Lady Anastasia never allowed the conversation to drift far from her relations with the nobility, Miss Endicott never allowed it to drift within gunshot of the Von Bumpfs. At last, the tea and talk came to an end, and with the rustle of aristocratic skirts down the stairs we were left to our middle-class selves.

"I was in mortal terror," I said when I had bowed Lady Anastasia into her cab and rejoined my unaccountably obtuse relative, "lest you would mention the Von Bumpf matter to her ladyship. It would have been most unfortunate, for I have a clue to the identity of our girl of last night."

"So have I!" announced my aunt, with a toss of her head. "And, sir, the next time that I refuse to notice your signals I hope you'll do me the kindness to remember that whatever else I may or may not be, I am never by any chance stupid!"

VI.

"Tom!"

"Aunt!"

"Tom, after I confronted you this morning with those two very damaging gloves, and you pretended to be thoroughly ashamed of yourself, how, how, sir, I ask, could you have been at that very moment concealing from me the much more disgraceful fact that you carried your clandestine little escapade of last night to the length of actually exchanging love-tokens with the creature?"

"Love-tokens, Aunt Honoria?"

"Love-tokens, sir!"

"Innocent."

"Of course! Always innocent—until I hold no less than two female gloves under your very nose!"

"The meanest prisoner in the dock is entitled by law to hear not alone the charge against him, but also the evidence."

"Tom, you scamp, look at this!"

Aunt Honoria explored with her thin old hand the fluffy regions beneath her outer skirt of grenadine. She was unconscionably long about locating the pocket. If there is one thing that gets on my dear aunt's nerves it is to be kept waiting. Playing at hide the slipper puts her usually equable temper to a severe test; of all women, she should have been the first to agitate a radical reform in the matter of placing pockets somewhere, anywhere, within reach, and where they might be discovered after a reasonably careful search.

I watched her struggles with growing anxiety; each futile clutch of her trembling hand increased the likelihood that I would "catch it" once she returned to her sermon.

"Pray don't tell me it's another glove, aunt!"

She shot a withering glance at me and continued her explorations. Finally, a gleam of triumph in her eye announced success. With ominous deliberation Aunt Honoria drew forth from the depths a clipping from a newspaper and held it out for me to read.

"There, sir! Unless your long career of gallantry has left you quite lost to

any sense of honor, you will now confess, I hope, sir, that this indecent advertisement refers to you!"

"An advertisement? Refers to me? Why, my dearest Aunt Honoria, this is really, really——"

"Read it, sir!"

I read:

"If the English or American gentleman who kindly fetched a droschke for the young lady in white, at the opera last night, would return the ring which she asked him to hold while she changed her gloves, he may demand reward in any sum, even to the value of the ring. Confidential. No questions asked; no prosecution. Address, Madame X., Villa Wahnfried, Christian-strasse, Dresden."

I looked at Aunt Honoria, then at the amazing advertisement, then once more at Aunt Honoria. It was too good to be true!

"Sweet are the uses of—advertisement!" murmured I when I could find a voice.

"And now, sir," bridled my aunt, glaring at me, "do you propose to tell me in the face of *this*, that you were not cruelly deceiving me this morning when you pretended to be so taken aback by the discovery of those scandalous gloves in the pocket of your supposedly moral Inverness? And that creature's ring in the pocket of your waistcoat all the time! Is it a very fine ring, Tom dear?"

"Magnificent!" I replied, stooping to kiss the kind old eyes twinkling now with wicked merriment.

"Show it me! Dear me! It is a splendid one, is it not?"

"The Cowboy Kid—Morris Bleecker, you know, aunt, of whom I have so often spoken—must have followed his affluent big brother's example and got his 'pile,' as they say in the States, for this bit of gold and stone cost a pretty penny, you may depend. Engaged, wouldn't you say, aunt?" I asked, forgetting quite that she knew nothing of my latest discoveries.

"My experience with engagement-rings, Tom, does not warrant an opinion as to that," laughed the venerable spinster; "but any extravagance is to be expected from Americans."

"And I'm jolly well glad of it, aunt, since of course I shall demand a reward of, say, three hundred pounds—not half what the ring is worth!" I rattled on, delighted to find that my indiscretion had passed unnoticed.

Aunt Honoria smiled.

"Do you know, Tom, I don't at all fancy the tone of that advertisement, not at all! Reward indeed! No questions asked! No prosecution! Insulting, I call that, most insulting—to an Endicott!"

"Quite so. But then, you know, dear aunt, the dear young creature did not learn my name."

"What of it, sir? What if she did not know your name? She saw you, did she not? She knew you for an English gentleman. For, of course, she couldn't have guessed that, through no fault of yours, you had the misfortune to be born in America."

I roared.

"Ah, but you see, Aunt Honoria, Madame X. didn't get even a glimpse of me; and it was the wary chaperon, and not the girl, who wrote the advertisement."

"That is true—which explains it. But now, Tom, what's to be done?"

"What's to be done, you say? How can you ask? Why, this, of course. This very day, at the proper hour, Miss Endicott will call at the Villa Wahnfried, pay her very elegant devoirs to Madame X., make the acquaintance of Miss —— of the charming young lady, you know," I caught myself just in time, "and duly return the ring to the rejoicing fiancée. And of course Miss Endicott will wear the lavender silk trimmed with the Endicott point; the state bonnet; and the——"

"The new furs which a certain incorrigible young rogue went without no end of necessaries to fetch her last Christmas."

"As Miss Endicott likes as to that. I shall select the smartest droschke in the——"

"No, dear boy! It's but a step; I can walk."

"The smartest cab in the whole line at the square, and Lady Anastasia's own

buttons shall ride on the box to carry in Miss Endicott's carte de visite. I fancy we'll hear no more about 'rewards' and 'no questions asked' after Miss Endicott has condescended to honor the Villa Wahnfried with her presence!"

"And you shall go with me—of course, Tom!"

"Certainly not!" I replied decidedly, my whole object in thus cajoling my aunt into undertaking the delicate mission arising from a doubtless very foolish but none the less very real dread of the possible results of meeting Saint Salome until after I—well, until after I had got the foolishness of an old fool a bit better in hand.

"Not? Why not? But you really must go, you know, Tom!"

"Not to-day, Aunt Honoria, thank you. It will be much better for you to go alone, far more likely to disabuse Madame X.'s mind, you know, of any lingering suspicions. And anyhow, I've to hunt up Morris Bleecker this afternoon. Oh, I say, you know, pray don't pout, dear aunt! You know that you'll dearly love to play the *grande dame* again—especially since the honor of the family is at stake?"

"As you will, as you will. It's always as *you* will, you headstrong boy!" scolded the dear old lady, beaming with delightful anticipations of her coming recrudescence in society.

At Aunt Honoria's request I made my way around to the top of Christian-strasse, to the intent that we might know exactly where is the Villa Wahnfried. I confess that I was not at all loath. Indeed, I was in a state of mild delirium over the blessed assurance that through my ever resourceful aunt I could now hope to establish relations with Miss Lee—or rather, with her proper guardian in Dresden—in a way at once fitting, natural, and, what was most to the point, of such a character as to permit of steps being taken immediately to frustrate the designs of Monsieur Blanc's agents, Mephisto and the sinister woman in black and diamonds.

Of course I should still have to look up poor Bleecker and acquaint that—of old—deucedly strenuous young dare-devil with my only too well-grounded suspicions; but whatever might come of my bungling efforts in that direction, with the most tactful and the most sympathetic of women, my very wise old aunt, in charge of the direct negotiations, there was nothing to fear.

It was with a light step and a lighter heart, therefore, that I made the necessary détour on my way down-town and soon found myself at the top of Christian-strasse. At the bottom, it is, like all other streets thereabouts, a street of apartment-houses; but at the upper end are a few more or less pretentious villas standing in their own grounds, most of them behind high brick walls.

I started down the street, keeping a sharp eye on the lookout for "Wahnfried" on the gate of one of these. But all the while I believed for some reason that the big square villa with the trees about it and a very high wall around the garden would prove to be "Wahnfried." And so it did.

Purposely, I took the opposite side of the street before I reached the gate; the thought that Saint Salome might see me thus prowling about her retreat filled me with guilty uneasiness. However, I reduced my brisk pace to a very slow one as I passed the gate. Under its covered arch stood a girl. Yes, of course, it was *she!* And she recognized me.

I started. My first impulse—to pretend that I hadn't seen her—was sheer madness. She had caught my eye; she must have observed that I knew her, for I was conscious of going red; and for me to hurry off without an explanation were to proclaim myself the thief that the advertisement hinted I might be. No, I must speak to her; I must put myself right at once.

"Oh, it's the gentleman who——" she exclaimed as I ran across the street.

"Who has been turning heaven and earth to find you all the morning. Mr. Endicott," I interrupted her, my hat in one hand and the other hand fumbling for the ring in a mad desire to produce it before she had time to allude to it.

"Mr. Endicott," she murmured, acknowledging the introduction in perfect form. "And you've taken all this trouble

to bring me my poor little ring—it's very precious to me—associations, you know, or I shouldn't have allowed madame to advertise for it."

"And your gloves also," I laughed as I fished them out of my pocket. "Really, Miss Lee—that is your name, is it not?" She bowed prettily. "I feel as though I knew you—mutual friends, you know—Mr. Morris Blee——"

"But how perfectly charming to think that you know Morrie!" she cried, extending a little hand which I clasped warmly. "I do wish madame was at home so that I might ask you to come in, Mr. Endicott, for I'm just positively certain that we must have lots and lots of mutual friends."

"My aunt, Miss Endicott—the dearest old soul in the world—was hoping to call upon you this afternoon, to fetch back the ring, you know, and to express the hope for both of us that we might seize the little episode of last night as the occasion of meeting you."

"And of course Miss Endicott will come, notwithstanding that you have given me the ring? Please beg her to call, or permit me to call upon her!"

"My aunt will feel very happy, I'm sure."

"And you don't think me so awfully terribly foolish for acting that way last night, do you?" she asked, with her glorious face turned up at me. "You see, it was all such a dreadful mistake. Madame thought I was with Mrs. Peabody Morton, and when that interesting little old gentleman found me alone in the foyer and came and begged me to allow him to escort me home—why, you know, I was so nervous that I actually began to cry. He apologized; and then I found you!"

"I'm more than glad that you refused to accept——" I was beginning to say in utter indiscretion, "that I had the good fortune to be in a position to assist you, I mean. Your advertisement mentions a reward; may I claim it in the shape of a promise that you will accept an invitation from my aunt to call?"

"Ah, but it was madame, not I, who insisted upon putting that horrid thing in the newspaper. I knew you were a gentleman, an American, or if not an American, an Englishman at least, so that——"

"Do please put it the other way around when you meet my aunt; she's English, you know."

"But you, surely, are American?"

"Yes, by birth."

"I just knew you were! Of course there are a lot of awfully nice men in Europe, but—well, I was terribly frightened when that foreigner spoke to me, and immensely relieved when you did. I wonder if you can understand my feeling?"

"Perfectly, thank you!" I thought, as she stood looking up at me, such infinite innocence as well as infinite womanliness in her big wistful hazel eyes, that I would have given the world for the right to protect, to guide, to claim her as my own all the days of my hungry, empty, aimless life; so I ran away from temptation by forcing myself to add as flippantly as I could: "But do you mean to tell me, that because it was madame and not yourself, who put that advertisement in the paper this morning, I am to get no reward at all?"

"Why—yes—certainly," she stammered, uncertain whether or not I was joking.

"Thanks!" I hastened to say in a tone she could not fail to understand. "If you don't mind, I'll beg for my reward—in addition, of course, to the promise you are to make my aunt to call—that you will not accept any invitations of any sort to go anywhere"—her face warned me that I was venturing rather far on such short acquaintance—"unless Morrie goes with you. Believe me, Miss Lee, I have excellent reasons for making this seemingly preposterous request."

"It's a request easily granted," she answered, with a laugh, after a moment's evident embarrassment, "for Europe is not America, and madame is as strict with us as though we were children. But it's awfully mean of you to be so mysterious."

"Morrie may be able to solve the mystery after I've had a talk with him, which reminds me that I've to hunt him

up this minute—a needle in a haystack, if he is anything like his former self."

"He's worse," she laughed, and I fled with its merry echo following me and—saddening me, a fool!

High and low and all in vain I sought Bleecker; the most that I could learn at his hotel being that he would certainly return for dinner at seven in the evening. So I returned to my aunt's, where I found active preparations making for the social sally of the afternoon. The lavender silk lay on the bed, the state bonnet on the dresser, and the furs over the back of a chair. The versatile *haus-frau,* who served Miss Endicott in every capacity, from cook to tirewoman, informed me that her mistress had gone to beg the loan of Lady Anastasia's very smart footman for the afternoon.

Late for luncheon and under a nervous strain, Aunt Honoria arrived with just time enough left for her to make her elaborate toilet. I hurried to the square, Lady Anastasia's smart little buttons with me, and secured a really very elegant bottle-green droschke, whose cabby looked a field-marshal. Aunt Honoria was awaiting her equipage in gorgeous array at the top of the stairs.

"Well, sir, here you are at last," she said, rubbing the powder off the tip of her nose. "I thought you were never coming. Give me the ring, please."

"B-b-but—I—haven't got it, you know!"

"Haven't the ring?" She was terrible in her moments of intense emotion, was Aunt Honoria. "Will you come to your senses for a moment, Thomas, and be good enough to advise me what you've done with it?"

"I g-gave it to the girl!" I groaned.

"Tom!"

VII.

I followed meekly the irate lady as she swept with crushing dignity into the drawing-room and sat down. But it required no very labored argument to persuade Miss Endicott that notwithstanding the ostensible reason for the proposed visit was no longer available, the real ulterior and vital reason—we must not forget this—urgently demanded that the visit be paid. Aunt Honoria is of a forgiving disposition; and then, too, one does not adorn one's self in one's best every day?

Moreover, my explanation really explained. My meeting with Miss Lee had been an accident pure and simple; more, it might even be looked upon as a positive blessing, since it had afforded me an opportunity to announce Miss Endicott's gracious design to call that very afternoon. This would insure Madame X. and her charming young protégée being at home; for it would have been quite too bad, would it not, had Miss Endicott gone to all the trouble of calling only to find the ladies out?

So it was my happiness to hand Miss Endicott into her carriage, wherein the good lady drove off like a duchess, with the field-marshal and buttons impressively rigid and solemn on the box. Then I hurried to the city bent upon an effort to discover, if possible, whether or no Monsieur Blanc was still in Dresden and where and how long he might be intending to stop.

At neither of the likely hotels was any such person known; nor at the office at the opera could I learn anything of use to me. The fifth box to the left of the king's had always belonged to the Baroness von Derfinger, but since the death of her ladyship it had been taken by the night by anybody desiring it. No, the Herr Intendent's clerk had no idea who the gentleman was who had occupied the box on the last gala night. This failure exhausted my hopes of success.

Luck was with me, however, for as I strolled aimlessly back along the Prager I spied Mephisto coming out of a sweet-shop. He was evidently abroad for a promenade, for he sauntered leisurely along, stopping now and again to look into a shop-window or to turn and stare at a pretty woman. Many also turned to look at him, for he certainly cut a dashing figure, twirling his little bamboo stick, twisting the ends of his mustache, and seemingly at perfect peace with his own conceit and all the gay

world. He seemed, too, on friendly terms with Dresden society, because his hat was continually in his hand as smart carriages rolled by, to whose fashionable occupants he sang out a cheery "*Bon jour, madame!*" and kissed the tips of his pearl-covered gloves. At a safe distance I followed him.

Finally, he drifted into the lobby of the Europäischerhof, with me not far behind him; too late, however, to determine whether or not he had gone up in the elevator or into some one or other of the rooms on the street floor.

Behind a newspaper I established myself in a commanding corner and waited. To no purpose, as far as Mephisto or Monsieur Blanc was concerned, for neither showed up.

When I had given up all hope of unearthing anything by waiting longer, I got up to go, when who should come running to me but Fred Winthrop, whom I hadn't seen since leaving college, although I had heard that he was in Dresden.

"Endicott, of all men the very one I wanted to see just now!" he exclaimed.

"Winny, old chap, how are you?"

"Fine as silk; don't I look it? But, I say, Tom, have you seen Bleecker—not our old Bleeck, you know, but the Kid? He's crazy to connect with you; wants to brace you for a portrait of the girl—going to be married, you know, in a few weeks."

"Awfully decent of the Kid, I'm sure, to think of me with a Europeful of famous painters to choose from! But, I say, Win, have you met the lady?"

"Not yet; hope to as soon as the Kid returns to-morrow. But I've seen her—b-e-a-u-tiful! I was at the opera last night and just naturally sized up the beauty-show in the horseshoe. Well, the minute my critical eye lighted upon a girl in white with a face like a dream and 'American' written all over her, I quit looking anywhere else. After the performance I had to run back to the box—I was with the Fordy Cadwaladers—to get a fan that one of our party had left, and as I got to the top of the stairs I saw Miss Lee—Jimmy Agnew had told me who she was—standing with a little old chap who appeared to be giving her unwelcome advice, or urging something she didn't like a little bit, for she was crying and—well, it was all I could do to keep from butting in and asking the little old codger what t'ell."

I did my own thinking during Winthrop's lively narration, and stoutly suppressed an incipient intention to take him into my confidence. We chatted of old times for half an hour and then I left him and went home to get from Aunt Honoria an account of her diplomatic expedition.

The lady—a born actress—was waiting for me still attired in her splendor, for well she knew that much of the effect of her story would be marred if she told it in a faded wrapper or even in her second-best gown. She had played your *grande dame;* she was about to describe the part; and she was dressed for the part. I told her that if I had my way she would never play any other part.

"But you should have seen your old aunt, Tom, in madame's elegantly appointed salon. You know, she receives into her very exclusive establishment only the daughters of the aristocracy and——"

"And of American millionaires?"

"Not she! The only Americans whom madame ever tolerates are the young ladies of very ancient and distinguished families, such as this dear Miss Lee's people; very old and, I must confess, very English family, the Lees. So, as I say, Tom dear, it would have done your heart good to see your poor old aunt once more among real persons."

I rose and kissed the wrinkled hand which Miss Endicott held out to acknowledge my profound salute.

"But now, tell me, Aunt Honoria, madame was not a short, dumpy, fat person with a——"

"What? Dear me, no! On the contrary, she is a tall, elegant figure, possibly tending to embonpoint, but with the grand air of the Faubourg St. Germain."

"Nor does she look like an adventuress or a——"

"Are you quite mad? Madame, I tell you, is a most distinguished-looking person."

"Or a clairvoyant, or a masseuse, or a——"

"Stop it, sir! Whatever do you mean?"

"Nothing, dear Aunt Honoria. Only I was sure that madame could not be the female accomplice whom I caught in the act of conspiring with Mephisto."

"Most certainly not!" Which reminds me, Tom, that I intimated to madame—under carefully veiled innuendoes of course—that I wished to see her in confidence at her earliest convenience. Miss Lee is coming to me to-morrow; the dearest girl!"

I let Miss Endicott ramble through a detailed account of her visit to the very elegant and exclusive establishment of madame; and again at five o'clock tea she regaled me with reminiscences of similar experiences in the halcyon days so long gone by. It was all most charming, most touching. And the excitement of it all told so on aunt's nerves that she asked me if I would mind running off to some restaurant for a bite of dinner, for she was quite too done to think of dining.

So I waited until she had got into bed, kissed her good night, and dressed so that I might treat myself to a quiet little dinner at the recherché café of Monsieur Boscowitz, of which many Bohemian friends had often told me. It is a unique little retreat frequented only by the worldly-wise and—I might as well confess it—the ungodly.

I secured a small table in that part of the room reserved for men and divided by a low parapet from the main hall. After carefully selecting a choice if modest dinner, I ordered it and a small bottle of Madeira, and gave myself over to enjoying the music and the decidedly mixed company about me. The orchestra consisted of a string quartet, Hungarians all, and each player by rights a soloist. The superb 'cello happened to be rendering in a matchless way my favorite, Wieniawski's "Legende," and I was presently in the happiest frame of mind and thoroughly prepared to enjoy to the full this my first little adventure of the kind in oh, Lord, how long!

The waiter fetched my oysters and *hors d'œuvres*, and I was adjusting my serviette and sipping the last few drops of my Martini cocktail—Americanisms fix themselves on one!—when I glanced over the parapet and saw a party of four seating themselves at a table.

I set down my glass and fairly started to my feet. Mephisto and his female accomplice took seats on one side of the table, and on the opposite side, Monsieur Blanc and Miss Lee. They were chatting vivaciously; the quartet were evidently out for a lark.

With no little effort I overcame a wild impulse to rush into the room and denounce Blanc and implore Miss Lee to give me the right to place her under my protection. Realizing the danger as well as the probable futility of any such move, I prudently decided to content myself with watching them, solacing my overwrought mind, however, with a resolve to follow them from the restaurant and to intervene at the last moment if events should make that step necessary.

Need I say that my delicious dinner remained scarcely tasted? One after another, all equally mad and equally unsatisfying, a score of possible explanations rushed through my head.

She had been decoyed by some foul means into accepting an invitation from the accomplice, who had managed to worm herself into the confidence of even the astute and suspicious Madame X. She had not known, until it was too late to withdraw, that two gentlemen were to be of the party, one of them the very man who had insulted her at the opera and whom, she herself had told me, she loathed and feared. She had been assured that Morrie Bleecker was to be present. She would presently discover the plot and rise indignant.

Anything, anything, rather than the frightful alternative—that she had deceived me both by her appearance of innocence and by what she had told me of herself. I could not force myself even for one tortured instant to believe that she was not my Saint Salome, but rather the Salome of Strauss.

So I sat and watched. Mephisto appeared to act as host, for it was he who conferred with the head waiter, who evidently was aware of the true character of his royal patrons, since he eyed Blanc with a look of abject servility and otherwise behaved himself suspiciously. Mephisto sneered at every suggestion of the head waiter, and then tossed the hopelessly Teutonic bill of fare on the table, and the waiter rushed off to fetch the white-capped chef.

With him Mephisto got on better, for it was plain that the cook caught monsieur's meaning as that finished gourmet elucidated his pet theories as to sauces, condiments and salads. A race of cooks, these French! The chef hurried away to work the miracles, and a waiter brought two silver wine coolers, from whose frosty interior protruded the necks of champagne-bottles.

I was alarmed, chagrined, furious, hurt. And with every moment the wretched girl seemed to be more and more what I could never have believed she could be. She met Mephisto's rapid fire of witticisms—no doubt all of them of questionable taste!—with flashing eyes and heightening color; and that she, as well as the head waiter, knew that she was in the presence of a king was shown by the marked deference in her manner whenever she answered his whispered questions. She took the liveliest interest in the discussion of the order, and went so far as to manifest delight when the wine was brought in and set on the floor, one bottle by Mephisto, the other by Blanc.

I could have shot the king when he leaned far over and whispered something to her which made her turn scarlet and then burst into uncontrolled laughter. I think that I might have at all events rushed in and choked him, had not the girl herself shattered by her unspeakable conduct my last desperate hope that she was an innocent victim.

I sat the dinner out, however, and it was only when they had reached the cognac and coffee that I could bear the outrage no longer. Calling my waiter, I sent in the following note to Mephisto:

MONSIEUR: The royal character of your friend, Monsieur Blanc, is known; so also are your infamous designs. Mademoiselle has friends present who will protect her; so best beware. E.

Mephisto read the astounding note, read it again, laughed, then looked serious and asked the king to step aside with him for a moment. They talked only a few seconds, and the king returned to the ladies at the table.

I was prepared to see Mephisto seek me out and demand satisfaction. But he merely went to the proprietor. After a moment's quiet talk with Boscowitz, he went back to his party and they all went on with their fun as though nothing had happened. Boscowitz left the room, but came back presently and straight to me.

"I beg pardon, sir, but somebody wishes to see you outside. Will you kindly fetch along your overcoat and hat?"

I followed him out into the passage, where an extremely polite sergeant of police informed me that I was under arrest.

VIII.

It was all done so quickly and withal so quietly that I doubt whether even the hall-porter realized that I went out a prisoner. I have met polite gentlemen in all walks of life, but that sergeant of police was a perfect Chesterfield. His consideration for my feelings amounted to chivalry. He suggested that we might avoid attracting the attention of the populace by my walking slowly a few yards in advance of him.

In this way we made our way to the police-station. While deeply appreciating the officer's delicate thoughtfulness, I was very far from forgetting that I was in a deucedly awkward situation. As we walked along I cudgeled my brains for some likely idea of the nature of the charge against me.

Totally ignorant of Saxon law, I had nevertheless certain vague notions of it which caused me no little concern. I remembered that my friend Max Schwartz, the marine painter, had once advised me, that if I should ever feel like committing any crime, from an in-

nocent little murder to the unpardonable lese-majesty, to be careful to commit it anywhere outside of Germany, where, said Max, they'll be sure to strangle one with red tape if they can't fasten proven guilt upon one.

Right gloomily I trudged along to the station, trying to determine what my fate was to be. It might very well turn out that by having ventured to meddle with the private affairs of a king, I was guilty of lese-majesty; or the veiled threat in my note may have aroused the suspicions of the king, and I would find myself accused of being a dangerous anarchist.

"It is contrary to the rules, sir, for an officer to converse with a prisoner," replied the sergeant to each of my anxious questions. "At the station all will be explained to the gentleman."

Arrived at the station I was informed by a very grave but at the same time very courteous official, that I was charged with the serious misdemeanor of having insulted and threatened certain patrons of the restaurant of one Jan Boscowitz; my examination before the magistrate would take place tomorrow morning at ten; it was really impossible to predict what the punishment might be; and, of course, it was the sincere hope of everybody that I would be able to establish my innocence.

"And in the meantime?" I asked, with dignified resentment.

"Ah, as to that," smiled the official, not in the least vindictively, but as one who fully understood his painful duty and would proceed to do it; "as to that, sir, I fear that we must beg you to remain in custody overnight."

"But," I protested hotly, "I have rights, surely? I cannot be denied the services of counsel; and every charge, short of murder or high treason, is bailable? This is monstrous, outrageous! And I give you fair warning that if I, an American citizen, am deprived of a single legal right, and held in jail overnight, the government of the United States will have something to say!" Thoughts of Coogan floated through my mind and I almost smiled.

"Now, sir, pray, pray do not permit yourself to become excited," pleaded the official gently. "By all means, sir, send for your lawyer or other friends at once, for there is no reason why you should be put to the—the—the inconvenience of sleeping in a cell."

I jumped at this suggestion, and for half an hour the telephone was kept busy trying to connect me with Coogan, Bleecker, Winthrop, even with men whom I scarcely knew. Naturally, I refrained from shortening my aunt's life by arousing that devoted lady with the news that an Endicott, and he the head of the family, was lying in jail, where she was please to come and get him out.

All of no avail; every one whom I tried to reach was out for the evening or out of town. With tenderness for which I shall always bless him, the official intimated to me that the rules required that he now lock me up for the night, and I was being led back into the prison, when an officer overtook us and told his superior that somebody wished to see him. I waited in the charge of a turnkey while the chief went back into the office. He returned after some five or six minutes, smiling and deferential.

"As I thought all the time, sir, quite as I knew it must be! A mistake. Yes, a gentleman called in company of Boscowitz, and they insisted upon withdrawing the absurd charge against you; so I have now the honor to advise you that you are quite free to proceed to the opera or whither it pleases you to go."

"But the gentleman—what sort was he?"

"A little old gentleman—gray mustache, bald, an eye with a twinkle in it, a man of the gay world, and an excellent judge of cigars," chuckled the official as he showed me a handful of Havanas.

"The king!" I said to myself; and hurried away from the embarrassing place, not as wise as the burned child, to try to overtake Blanc and reach the side of my poor faltering Saint Salome, in the mad hope that I might even yet replace the tarnished halo above her glorious head. But of course they had

left the restaurant by the time that I reached it; so I paid the bill—Boscowitz actually hesitated to accept my money, after what had occurred—and I knew that further pursuit was useless.

Then I went home and straight to bed. But no sleep for me that night. Fearful lest, in spite of all my firm resolves, I should betray to my aunt signs of distress, I stole out of the house early in the morning and had a hard trot through the Grosser Garten on a hired hack with a villainous bad temper. In mastering the brute's ugly disposition I so far forgot my troubles, and so nearly mastered my own low spirits, that I bore with commendable cheerfulness Aunt Honoria's persistent allusions to Miss Lee, whose promised visit on that very day—coming so soon after yesterday's social excitement—had thrown Miss Endicott into a flutter of aristocratic nerves.

I was glad to escape, much earlier than was at all necessary, on the plea that I had received intimations of an order for a portrait and must make my hay while the rich American sun shone. Nor was my haste pretended, for I realized that not a moment was to be lost in putting poor Morris Bleecker in possession of all the facts.

On my way down to his hotel I nursed the earnest hope that I should find him returned and able to give me a half-hour. But as I sent up my card and waited for the servant to report if he was at home I found myself secretly praying that the poor fellow was still out of town. How, I asked myself, how was I to tell the boy all that I actually knew and the still more terrible things that I suspected, concerning the woman whom he expected to marry in a few weeks?

Well did I foresee the effect upon a proud, highly strung, romantic boy, of the announcement that one of the crowned heads of Europe—a king notorious for his evil life—was pursuing his fiancée and had already been seen with her in a public restaurant of rather worse than doubtful repute?

A tragedy that would shock two continents would likely follow; but my duty was clear. But I did pray that I might not have to perform it until, say, after luncheon, or—any time but now! Mr. Bleecker was at home, however, and would I be good enough to come right up to his room?

"By Jove! Endicott, old man, this is too right!" sputtered the Kid through the lather which he was rubbing on his face. "I've been trying to nail you for two days. Don't mind if I finish shaving, do you? Thanks! Sit down, old chap—cigars in the skull there under my shirt. Gee! But it's good to see you again! All of ten years, isn't it?"

We chatted of old friends, old times, old memories, until he was done shaving and had completed his toilet. With every jest and outburst of boyish delight of life my pending task grew blacker.

"I'm going to be married, you know," he said as he lit a cigarette and threw himself full length on the lounge. "And that's why I was especially anxious to get hold of you before you left Dresden—want you to paint me a portrait of Miss Lee, you know. Just wait until you've seen her!"

"I caught a glimpse of her at the opera the other night," I said, wishing to heaven that this were all the truth, "and of course I should like above all things to do her portrait, but I fear I shall have to be leaving Dresden by tomorrow at the latest—ought to have gone yesterday."

"Oh, but see here, Tom, that's not playing the game, you know! Seriously, old man, I've counted upon having that portrait done before the wedding. Ever since I saw your wonderful 'Five o'Clock Tea'—far and away the finest portrait I ever saw—at the Luxembourg, I've vowed that I'd have Miss Lee sit to you. So please forget about having to leave before the thing's done. If it's a question of money——"

"Dry up, Kid, can't you?"

"I was only going to say, Endicott," went on he in all seriousness now, "that my last two plays have put me so far up Easy Street that I can jolly well afford to make it worth your while to chuck whatever business is calling you off in such a blooming hurry."

"Thanks, old man," I said, quite as serious as he; "but I really can't stop just now. And what's this you say about plays? Not a playwright, are you?"

"What!" cried the Kid, sitting up and looking at me with an air of injured pride. "You don't mean to tell me that you haven't heard about my howling success? What is fame?"

"I hear nothing, these days, you know, of what's doing in dear little old New York. But I congratulate you with all my heart. Forgive me, Morrie, but in your innocent youth you did not give any very marked promise of ever becoming a literary light!"

"But it was in me just the same!"

"So it would seem. And once more here's looking at you!"

"And that reminds me, Tom, that one of my reasons for wanting to catch you to-day is, that I'm giving a little dinner to-night to a couple of the brightest men ever—met them in London at a Bohemian gathering where I also met every scribbler worth meeting—and you will make my little party complete."

"Awfully sorry," I replied, the clutch of a mighty pity and a nasty feeling of cowardice at my throat, "but I'm in no mood, dear boy, for any such little night off. The fact is, Bleecker," I went on, standing over him, "that a deucedly disagreeable duty——"

"Cut out that word, do for heaven's sake! It's taboo among friends! All the more reason why you should drown pale duty in good-fellowship, if you've got a date with the plagued nuisance in the morning. And, Great Scott, Endy, old pal, don't make me feel as though I was throwing pearls before—a philistine! Do you know who these men are that I ask you to meet? Not a top-notcher in the craft but would give his next semiannual royalties for a chance to crack a bottle of wine with Cocq!"

"Cocq?" I gasped. "You don't mean to say that the author of '*Pensées d'un Bon Diable*' is here and that you know him, and that I've got a chance to see him? That's the cleverest book and the wisest since Juvenal."

"Never met Juvenal, but really Cocq's more fun than a barrel of monkeys. Knew you'd guess again about having to give my little dinner the go-by."

"The temptation is certainly strong; but who's your other lion?"

"Guess! Bigger than Cocq! It's Hilaire St. Jean! How's that for two of a kind?"

I was bowled over quite. The thought of actually meeting and spending a whole evening with the Belgian genius was more than it is in man to brush aside with considerations of duty however depressing. I showed my surprise and delight, and the Kid failed not to notice this.

"As I say," he urged, "I met the two in London, and bumped against them here only day before yesterday, and of course promptly corralled them for this evening; and you fill out the four at table. On?"

Before I could demur—I like to think that I was going to demur—before I could reply a servant arrived with a note for Bleecker. It was from Miss Lee. She and her chaperon were below, waiting to carry him off on a no less charming expedition than to the royal potteries, where a check for several thousands of dollars from an uncle in Baltimore was to be laid out in Dresden china for the bride's new home. Bleecker looked appealingly at me.

"Can't keep you an instant, dear boy, of course," I said, "but, Bleecker, I have something of the very gravest nature to discuss with you—not later than to-night after our little dinner."

"What the deuce?" he cried when he saw my face.

"Miss Lee is waiting," I replied; and he hurried down-stairs, singing out to me to stop as long as I liked and to help myself to cigars and to anything that I could find to drink.

"Poor boy!" I murmured, and followed him down-stairs.

IX.

Anticipations of the meeting with the two great men in the evening proved a soothing opiate to my overwrought

nerves. I went home almost as happy as if that harrowing interview with poor Bleecker was never to be.

Aunt was lunching with the poor dear Miss Boppses or some other poor dears, so I'd the house to myself. For the twentieth time, I read Cocq's inimitably clever "Thoughts of a Good Devil," and fortified myself for a personal meeting with Hilaire St. Jean, by studying once more and in a more searching way his terrible play, "Nemesis."

I was engaged thus when old Frau Beckmesser fetched me my tea and a bit of cold mutton on a tray, tastes of which I took between the lines. After lunching I felt so seedy that I thought a nap was in order.

I think that I've already stated that my aunt's apartment is so small that the divan in the drawing-room has to serve me for a bed; my dressing-room is the little cloak closet, scarcely larger than a cupboard, off from the drawing-room and lighted only through the openings in the fretwork cut out of the panels in the door. Removing my coat and collar I threw myself on the divan and was sound asleep in a jiffy.

And I must have slept long, for I was awakened by the sound of my aunt's voice in the passage, and she was not to return until four o'clock. Aunt Honoria was speaking in tones which clearly indicated the presence of a distinguished guest; and the next moment I heard Miss Lee's merry laugh.

I sprang to my feet in terror. Flight through the passage was of course cut off. No more could I be caught in my shirt-sleeves and minus my collar. There was only one avenue of escape—the cupboard.

Snatching up my coat and collar and necktie, I fled into it, just in time, too, for Aunt Honoria opened the drawing-room door as I was closing the door of the closet. Thanks to the fretwork, I could hope to breathe; also I could observe what passed without.

Miss Endicott was in the seventh heaven of gracious hospitality and delight over entertaining so charming a guest. She laid by the state bonnet and begged Miss Lee to be seated. The girl was enjoying it all quite as much as my dear aunt.

"You should feel complimented, Miss Endicott," laughed Miss Lee, "for madame has violated all the traditions by allowing me to come to see you without a chaperon—a breach of the proprieties which, I am sure, she would not have countenanced for even my mother's sake!"

"I am honored indeed, dear child, and shall take an early occasion so to advise madame," replied Aunt Honoria, ringing a little silver bell which appeared mysteriously on the center-table.

I wondered at this greatly, for Frau Beckmesser was as deaf as a post and was to be got to come from the kitchen only by personal summons. But I might have known that Miss Endicott would be prepared to play the hostess *à la marquise*. And she was. To the call of the bell responded Lady Anastasia's grave footman, looking as though he had just learned of the sudden death of his last friend on earth.

"Tea, Smirker," murmured Miss Endicott, and Smirker glided out of the drawing-room noiselessly and in profound melancholy.

"And now, my dear," said my aunt, "what is your name? For we're to be great friends, you know?"

"Virginia," answered Miss Lee; and I started.

"Virginia?" cried Aunt Honoria with delight, as though she, too, caught the sweet significance of the name. "But what a lovely name! So sweet, so—so—so spiritual, you know, my dear, and so like you!"

Smirker now returned with the tea-service, the solitary relic from the glory that was once my aunt's. I love the dear old lady never quite so much as when she's serving tea. I have good reason; it was my portrait of her thus engaged which won for me my one glimpse of fame. My "Five o'Clock Tea"—a quaint picture of Miss Endicott in the lavender silk—is in the Luxembourg and would have fetched no less than two thousand pounds—Lord Trewe offered me that for it—had I had the heart to sell it.

"And now, my dear," went on Aunt Honoria, "tell me of yourself, your dear home in the States, and if you really don't think my nephew very clever."

I blushed when Miss Lee said that she thought I was the finest gentleman she had ever met, so old-fashioned in my manners, so sympathetic, so—I stopped listening.

"Ah, if you but knew the dear fellow as I do," cried aunt, beaming, "for the dearest, kindest, most chivalrous soul in the world!"

"That's just it," replied Miss Lee; "chivalrous!"

"So rare a virtue in these days, my dear."

"I know it! Why, just see the other night. Of course, it was all a foolish mistake on my part, but really, Miss Endicott, when that other gentleman—quite an elderly man, too—came and spoke to me, I was so frightened that I could scarcely speak. But the moment I saw Mr. Endicott, why, I—well, I felt safe!"

"God bless you, child, for that! And what you tell me of your instinctive fear of the other gentleman makes me bold enough to tell you that it was for the very purpose of warning you that I sought your more intimate acquaintance. This is a wicked old world, my dear young friend, most wicked and full of snares for the innocent!"

Miss Lee looked embarrassed and at a loss what to reply. I prayed fervently that Aunt Honoria's delicate tact might not fail her at so critical a moment; quite without reason, for as the good old woman told the inexperienced young one what we knew of the designs of Monsieur Blanc I realized that there be no places too holy, no places too near the forbidden, but a good woman may tread them without sacrilege and without danger of injuring that which she would fain protect.

Lightly, with infinite discretion, modestly, with never a hint of indelicacy, Miss Endicott gave the wondering girl a glimpse of the evil that lurks beneath the fascinations and the polish of the great world. By the time that she had got to the point, and ventured to tell the girl that we had only too good reason for fearing that her beauty had attracted the attention of a certain royal personage, Miss Lee's education had so far advanced that she seemed to comprehend it all.

"A king, Miss Endicott?" she exclaimed, red and trembling.

"A wicked, shameless, thoroughly disreputable royal monster, my dear girl—but there, now, pray don't alarm yourself! Now that we all know that his majesty is here and that his infamous accomplices have sought to have you meet him, there is really nothing whatever to fear, nothing!"

"Oh, but this is terrible, Miss Endicott!" sobbed the girl, setting down the teacup lest all the tea should be spilled.

Aunt Honoria rose and went and stood bending over her with her kind old arms about her until the little storm of tears subsided.

"But I'm sure I've never even laid eyes on this horrid king, never!"

"Very true, my dear Virginia! Certainly not!" replied aunt, shaking her head with asperity; and I wanted to burst in upon them and tell them that Virginia had seen the king, had spent a whole evening with him at that compromising café of old Boscowitz.

"And oh, what *will* madame say when she hears of all this?" groaned Miss Lee, recovered sufficiently to begin to foresee consequences. "Poor madame, who hates to have any of the girls out of her sight an instant; and who thinks every officer we pass in our walks—we march two by two, you know, like Sunday-school children—that every solitary officer is trying to flirt with us!"

"But madame must *not* hear a word about it!" cried my aunt, pulling the agitated girl down upon her lap. "That's why I've thought it best to take yourself into my confidence rather than madame. It would be cruel to alarm madame now that there is nothing whatever to be alarmed about, wouldn't it?"

"How very, very good and kind of you, dear Miss Endicott! And you real-

ly think that that dreadful king will not attempt to annoy me in any way?"

"Certainly not! My nephew, Mr. Thomas Endicott, comes of an ancient line of knights and gentlemen. Then, too, he is English—we English despise these infamous foreign manners!"

"So do I!" cried the girl, her great eyes flashing. "Oh, why aren't there more men like Mr. Endicott?"

"There are, my dear; but they're all at least forty years of age. No girl should ever think of marrying a man under forty. No! At five and twenty a man is but a boy; at thirty he is merely at the crossways, up or down, good or bad; but at forty a man is—whatever he is ever to be!"

"I always thought that very thing," replied Miss Lee, cruelly reflecting, I felt, upon the Kid's barely thirty years.

"And so did I," echoed Miss Endicott, leaning forward to reach the miniature of herself on the table.

It was the portrait of a girl of eighteen, beautiful, proud, with Early Victorian drooping shoulders and the lovely auburn hair brushed smooth down over the ears. With this bewitching proof of what she had been Miss Endicott was wont to silence all possible expressions of pity for what she now was. A thousand times have I smiled sadly at this pretty little act of defiance of time's worst.

"Yes, my dear girl," she went on as she observed Virginia's genuine admiration of the beauty of fifty years ago, "I was once young; I had no end of opportunities; Lord Bruffton's second son, now the reigning earl, asked me to be his wife; the present Lord Bishop of Ilchester was in the way of going into a melancholy over me; and there were not a few other gentlemen of parts and position."

"But——" sighed Miss Lee sympathetically.

"But having once loved, I could never think of marrying any one else. General Sir Thomas Pressley spoke to me on the eve of his departure for the Crimea. I loved him; he was a man among ten thousand, and—forty."

"And he was——" sighed Virginia.

"He never returned. He was one of the first to fall at Sebastopol. Tom is named after him. This makes my nephew all the more dear to me; the name is all I now have of that attachment, that and—this!"

Her wrinkled old fingers fumbled in the front of her bodice and presently drew forth the little bag made of chamois skin which always hung there. With Virginia's quickly moistening eyes watching her, Aunt Honoria untied the sacred reliquary.

"His Victoria Cross, my dear," murmured aunt.

"May I hold it?" asked the girl reverently.

As she turned the cross over in her hand Virginia tried no longer to keep back the tears. Age and youth, seventy and twenty, it is all one, when love with her poor trembling bereaved hands draws aside the veil from before the Holy of Holies. Then the girl stooped and kissed the old woman—and both smiled.

"No wonder you love your nephew," said Miss Lee as she rose to go.

"And so would you if you knew that great, tender, unselfish heart of his. At all events, dearest Virginia, with my brave Sir Galahad sworn to protect you, you need fear nothing more from this vile king."

"I'm sure of it!"

Then she was gone—and I cowered into the corner of my hiding-place, knowing only that I loved her.

X.

By the hands of a public commissionaire I received, late in the afternoon, this note from Bleecker:

DEAR ENDICOTT: I guess I'm in love, all right, for I've just realized that I didn't tell you where we are dining to-night. The feast of reason and flow of soul will take place at Boscowitz's—not, of course, his new and eminently proper place, but at his old and comfortably improper rendezvous of the elect, near the end of the bridge, in the Alt Stadt. Seven o'clock sharp! Better sharpen your wits, for Cocq is bad and St. Jean a fiend with his tongue.

Yours for a rum go,
THE KID.

I was immensely relieved by this note; it made less hard to bear the thought that Saint Salome had supped the night before with those vampires, since, it appeared, Boscowitz had two restaurants, and it had been at the respectable one that I had seen her. Also, it was pleasing to know that when I had said "Boscowitz's" to the cabby, not knowing that there was more than one place of that name, that excellent driver and judge of character had without a moment's hesitation taken me to the proper one.

Still further to heighten my improving feelings, I met Mr. Forbes on the Prager. He had just learned that I was *the* Endicott who had painted the Luxembourg "Five o'Clock Tea" portrait; and nothing would do but I must consent to stay in Dresden long enough to have Mrs. Forbes sit to me—at my own terms! But, of course, I had to tell him the same old lie; pressing business called me away at once.

I dressed early so that I could walk across the bridge by daylight, and have a look around the Old Town before dark. The battered arches of the bridge where Napoleon's guns had left their century-old marks; the narrow streets of the ancient city across the river, with their picturesque timbered gables protruding over the footpaths; the droll old market-folk; the strutting soldiers swarming about the corners near the barracks—all made the Alt Stadt worth a visit.

With plenty of time still on my hands, I reached the restaurant a good quarter of an hour before half-past six; so that I had a long wait before me.

I bought an evening paper and sat in a corner of the inner grill-room. Presently two men entered the outer room and ordered drinks. I glanced at them over my paper. It was Monsieur Blanc and Mephisto; and I blessed my stars, for now I could point them out to Bleecker and thus avoid all possible mistakes of identity.

They chatted merrily as they sat sipping their absinthe, but in tones too low for me to hear. A few minutes before seven, Bleecker came bustling in and, to my infinite amazement, ran up and greeted Blanc and his friend with great cordiality. They had evidently made it a point to deceive him as to their identity, the better to throw him off his guard when they developed an acquaintance with Miss Lee. The three then came into the room where I sat waiting.

"Ah, here you are!" shouted Bleecker when he saw me. "Monsieur St. Jean, let me present my dear old friend, Mr. Endicott—painted 'Five o'Clock Tea,' you know, at the Luxembourg."

Dumb and furious I felt the king grasp my hand warmly. Mephisto was then introduced as the famous Cocq. I don't know how I suppressed my impulse to tell Bleecker who these supposed literary geniuses really were.

As it was, I fear that I must have betrayed something of the disgust I felt, for Bleecker asked me what the devil ailed me, Cocq rallied me by crying: "*Courage, mon ami; le diable est mort!*" and St. Jean prescribed "the green widow, just a kiss, you know, for the blue devils."

So more absinthe was ordered, after drinking which we went into the private room which Bleecker had engaged, and presently dinner was served. I retreated behind a feigned headache and maintained a frigid silence.

"You're a pretty fellow, a cool cup of tea, I must say, Bleecker," said Cocq, with an oyster impaled on a tiny trident in his finicky fingers, "to invite a lot of people to dine with you last night, and then fail to show up! However, we had a much better dinner—I myself ordered it!—and if you imagine for one moment that Miss Lee and our gay young Hilaire here didn't go the pace, you're wrong, my friend, dead wrong!"

I could have choked him.

"Missed my train, you know; awfully sorry," explained Bleecker. "And from what I hear, my absence did not dampen the occasion."

"Absence—the absence of a jealous monsieur, that is," chuckled St. Jean, with a wicked wink at his accomplice, "makes the heart of an old devil grow fonder toward mademoiselle, *n'est-ce-pas?*"

This was simply intolerable. I gave Bleecker a vicious kick in warning; but the idiot merely cried "Ouch!" and roared at the old Lothario's little joke. Then all three went at one another with gibe and repartee. I confess that I never listened to wittier quirks or more iridescent nonsense than both of the conspirators injected into the conversation for the next half-hour.

Not that this tended in the least to modify my disgust; on the contrary, it but served to deepen it, since it showed how all too easy must be their success in any society. St. Jean, or, as I persisted in knowing him, Blanc, annoyed me exceedingly by eying me constantly as though he suspected that I knew who he really was.

Suddenly, he sprang to his feet and began to count out a handful of small German coins, which he piled on the table while we all stared at him with growing curiosity.

"Now I know!" he exclaimed. "I have been looking at Monsieur Endicott from the instant I saw him; and now I know! Cocq, look at Endicott carefully now, and then recall our good friend at Cologne—the good angel, you know, Cocq, who so kindly gave up his sleeping accommodation to us, and incidentally enabled me to win that little bet of a hundred francs from you!"

Cocq wrinkled his brow, looked me over critically, and then leaned back and screamed with laughter.

"But, I say, Monsieur St. Jean," demanded Bleecker. "What's the game, you know?"

"Why, only," replied St. Jean when he could stop crying from laughing, "that when Cocq and I were coming here from Brussels—to hear 'Salome'—we forgot to engage a compartment in the sleeping-carriage at Cologne. I bet Cocq a hundred francs that I could procure accommodations even if the train were quite taken; and Cocq, who never misses a chance to lose his money, took me up. At Cologne is a delightfully confiding station superintendent; to him I quietly intimated that I was no less a personage than a certain king whom I slightly resemble. The good man believed me—and, it seems, he was able also to persuade our friend Monsieur Endicott; for Endicott gallantly offered to give up his compartment to oblige his majesty myself, *voilà!* And the best of the joke was, that I forgot to pay Endicott the price of his compartment. Here it is, my dear fellow, with a king's most abject apologies and, once more, thanks!"

I collapsed. My headache vanished. All of us stood up and shook hands across the table.

Cocq's likeness to *Mephistopheles* now proved to be no more than a happy fancy, which all Europe had long ago pointed out and which had given Cocq himself the inspiration to write his "Thoughts of a Good Devil." St. Jean also underwent a complete metamorphosis in my eyes; gone was the leer of the roué, gone the cunning of the Lothario. All that I now saw in his distinctly unusual face were genius and the shadow of the sorrow that is ever his who knows his world too well.

Again and again I wrung his hand and Cocq's, as we roared with laughter and quaffed a bumper to our better acquaintance. And above it all floated the vision of Saint Salome with never a spot on her halo.

"But now I must tell you the best part of it all," said Cocq, after we were once more seated. "While St. Jean, my sister and Miss Lee were dining with me last evening, a waiter fetched me a card bearing the most astonishing message. That innocent fool at Cologne must have advised all of our fellow travelers that a king incog was among them, for some fellow at the restaurant last night evidently had heard the precious story. He wrote that St. Jean's true royal character was known, and—since his kingly alter-ego is somewhat of a lady-killer—that mademoiselle would be protected! How's that, *mes amis*, for a bit of melodrama in real life, eh? Well, I reported the diverting little episode to Boscowitz, who flies off to the police, and *voilà!* as we were leaving the café I learned that my unknown correspondent, the would-be chivalrous defender of mademoiselle, was already lodged in

jail! It must have been midnight before Boscowitz and myself finally managed to have the poor beggar set at liberty!"

I laughed louder than any of them when Cocq ended his story. Nor does either of them to this day suspect who Saint Salome's knight-errant was.

Far into the small hours we sat over our cigars and talk; altogether the most enjoyable evening that it had ever been my good fortune to spend.

On reaching home, although it was so late, I hoped that Aunt Honoria might hear me and sing out to me as she frequently did; for I longed to set her good old heart at rest by revealing to her the happy dénouement of the moral tragedy in which she had been become so deeply interested. But, for once, the old lady was snoring placidly when I tiptoed to her door, and I was obliged to wait until the morning.

With her tea I was admitted to her room about ten o'clock the next day, and right good to see was the kind old face, right good to hear the merry old cackle, when I told my tale. We were still talking it over and aunt was delivering a most edifying sermon on the text: "Judge not, that ye be not judged," when visitors were announced.

"Goodness! Who can they be so early?" cried Aunt Honoria. "And I in my morning gown!"

"Oh, only Morris Bleecker and Miss Lee," I said, looking at the cards which Frau Beckmesser had brought. "They'll feel honored, dear Aunt Honoria, if you receive them *sans cérémonie*. Do!"

Stopping only to pat the ribbons in her cap as she passed the mirror, Miss Endicott sailed forth on my proud arm to welcome her guests. Bleecker was standing by the table in the middle of the drawing-room, looking down at the miniature of my aunt, which a girl whom I had never seen before was holding in her hand. She was a handsome, smart, distinguished-looking girl of perhaps three and twenty, with beautiful light golden hair; an American at a glance, but an American well-seasoned by long residence in Europe.

I looked in vain about the room for Miss Lee.

"Present me to your aunt, please, Endicott," said Bleecker as I stood hesitating a moment; and I did so. "And now, Miss Endicott," went on Bleecker as proud as an admiral on the bridge, "permit me to present my fiancée, Miss Lee."

"I feel as though I knew Miss Endicott already," said the girl, curtsying prettily before the great lady, "for my sister Virginia has talked of nothing but your kindness and goodness to her when she called yesterday."

I felt dizzy, and groped back of me for a chair to lean upon.

"We are so very happy to think, my dear," replied Aunt Honoria, "that my nephew was so fortunate as to be able to return your dear sister's engagement-ring, since it has been the means of——"

"Engagement-ring?" cried Miss Lee. "Virginia engaged? Pardon me, but I really can't help laughing. Why, my dear Miss Endicott, Virginia vows that she'll never marry—unless some very perfect gentle knight comes riding down to this prosaic age from the ages of derring-do. Virginia is a dreamer."

Aunt Honoria sent a queer little look at me, who stood lost in a sudden glory of a great hope.

"And see here, Endicott," exclaimed Bleecker after we were seated and chatting of many things; "business or no business, you've simply got to stay here long enough to paint Maud's portrait, hasn't he, Maud? Yes, and Virginia's, too, for that matter!"

"I'll try to arrange it," I answered.



The LOVE EYES OF TRINA

By Steel Williams

"MAD" Olaf was desperately in love with blue-eyed Trina Borgstrom, whose widowed mother ran the boarding-house at the "Blue Hematite" mine in the discovery days of the now world-famous Mesaba Iron Range. His infatuation was camp gossip and a self-evident proposition to everybody with the exception of the one man who, to save complications, should have known it.

To put the situation briefly, Olaf's sister—Lena Nelson—was "second cook" to Mrs. Borgstrom, while her daughter, Trina, a more than ordinarily comely Norwegian girl, had the "dress-up" position of waitress on the "chuck" table. And arrayed in her "good clothes," the rather coquettish maid devoted much of her time to shattering the hearts of the rough miners, while plainer but more substantial Lena was wisely kept in her "old duds" in the seclusion of the kitchen with never a chance "to get into the game" except at odd moments.

But hampered by circumstance if she was, Lena, too, nourished a romance, for in secret she worshiped at the shrine of the mining-captain, Knute Nordson; though of this the slender, fair-haired "boss" had as little suspicion as he had of her brother's passion for Trina.

In stature a giant, intellectually "Mad" Olaf was a dwarf. His childish pranks were a subject of constant talk among the miners; and though always good-humored, his playfulness was of much the same order as one might reasonably expect to find in a well-meaning grizzly bear. Of enormous strength he was feared by every man on the location, but, being ever ready to lend a helping hand, his popularity was as great as is possible to a giant who associates with pygmies.

Hitherto the "Mad One" and the captain had been good friends, and Knute, of slight build and almost feminine in his extreme Scandinavian blondness, had cleverly utilized Olaf's mighty muscles to keep the peace of the camp within prescribed bounds by making him "deputy boss."

"It is your business," said Knute, "to stop the fights before the mens skall hurt each other 'nough for lay-off." And overjoyed at the great honor which had been conferred upon him, the giant stretched out his massive arms as if to demonstrate his ability and chuckled:

"I skall do her all right, boss," words which he made good that night when a battle royal started in the bunk-house. In stentorian tones he proclaimed his official position and ordered an immediate cessation of hostilities. But the angry men, furious at his interference, turned in a united assault upon the official peacemaker. For a few seconds the astonished Olaf stood like a Colossus while the little ones tugged at his tree-trunk legs in a vain attempt to overturn him. Then wriggling, scream-

ing bodies went shooting through the air and seizing his two remaining assailants as a Great Dane might have taken my lady's pet poodle, he shook them till they howled for mercy.

"By hal," roared the giant as he tossed the men into a corner, "the boss he tal me I skall stop the fights 'fore you skall get hurt 'nough to tak' layoff, and"—his broad face spread into a grin—"by Yiminy, I skall do her if I haf to break efry one of your dam' necks." And from that moment no one ever again questioned his authority.

As has been said, it was a matter of common talk that the "Mad One was gone on Trina." Trina of the fluffy, blond hair and eyes of blue, which, when they smiled upon him so thrilled his giant frame that he deemed the world, yea, heaven itself, well lost could he but possess himself of this treasure of loveliness. In his secret soul he spoke of her as "mine womans"; and woe to the man who should attempt to steal her from him.

But that any one would presume to question his claims had never occurred to him until one evening at the bunkhouse some daring pygmy ventured to intimate that he, himself, was casting covetous eyes upon the maid. But hardly had the words left his mouth before he found himself in the strangling grasp of the giant, who growled in his frightened ear:

"You dam' leedle lady-bug, if I skall once more hear of you so much as look at mine girl I will twist off your head like you bane a chicken." Then hurling the gasping man into a bunk, he glared at his fellows:

"What I haf say I will do to him I skall do to any faller that throws the love eye at Trina!" And never again did the bunk-house contingent dare lift its amorous gaze to the chosen one of Olaf.

But now the serpent whispered in his affrighted ear that the boss, too, was casting longing glances at the widow's daughter. And *he* was not of the bunkhouse.

To Mad Olaf the captain represented the mine, wealth, position and a kind of power that has ever dominated and controlled mere brute strength.

Then with the sharpened eye of jealousy his sidelong gaze was ever fastened on Knute, who, from his place of honor at the head of the chuck table, cast not infrequent sheep's-eyes at the apparently delighted server of his pork and beans. With his massive, chestnut head cupped in his enormous hands, Olaf, regardless of his food, would sit in dogged silence, always watching, though every coquettish glance of Trina's—and they were many—bestowed upon the captain burned the Mad One's heaving breast like daggers of fire. And she saw how he suffered but reveled in it, as does every pretty, empty-headed coquette, once she knows she has the power to bring the sweat of agony to the brow of some helpless ox of a man.

As the days went on the giant's stricken eyes turned often in a mute appeal for mercy to the foolish girl, who was so cruelly baiting him. But, urged on by her vanity, she could not resist the temptation to continue a flirtation which she was perfectly aware might soon result in Olaf's doing some terrible injury to the boss. And although at heart she really admired the giant immensely and cared little or nothing for Knute, yet with that strange and unaccountable trait which is so often found in her type of woman, she seemingly redoubled her efforts to ensnare the unsuspecting boss, who would have been more than man had he not, in some measure, responded to her wiles.

Not that the captain particularly cared for her, as the substantial and reliable Lena was very definitely in his mind's eye for a life-partner; but—man is man; and having become slightly intoxicated with the attractions of the most delightful of all games, he postponed from day to day the declaration which he fully intended to make. This neglect of his plain and manifest duty not only made two people miserable, but it likewise added to the store of wrath which had already nearly reached the bursting point in the Mad One's seething brain.

He who had been the life of the camp was now sullen, morose and solitary. No longer did the reedy squeak of his protesting accordion blend its wheezy, heart-broken tones with the sharp, staccato yelping of the gaunt timber-wolves which, ever since the "big snow," had nightly joined in Olaf's serenading. For these starving gray terrors of the north woods now lurked always about the little clearing, and each night glared out from the safe shelter of the mighty pines; their bloodshot eyes blazing with famished longing for an opportunity to make a meal upon any unfortunate who might by chance stray from the half-dozen rude log houses that made up the camp of the Blue Hematite.

And now the change in the giant had become so marked that one day the unwitting Knute asked innocently:

"What for you got such a grouch, Olaf?"

But Olaf had only laughed harshly:

"Mebbe the boss, he tank Mad Olaf bane yust big baby, but, by hal, I skall show him 'fore long that I bane best dam' man ever step on Mesabi."

"He bane madder as the devil 'bout somet'ing," muttered the astonished captain as the big fellow strode hurriedly away. Then he curled the ends of his silky, blond mustache reflectively for a few moments, his fair brow cleared, and he said in a tone which indicated a satisfactory solution of his problem:

"I have notice that Olaf bane off his feed couple weeks, so I tank that is what make him so sore with everybody." An explanation entirely erroneous, but one which unfortunately caused him to refrain from seeking any further light on the subject.

But if the Mad One had failed to enlighten Knute, he made no such mistake with his sister when, that afternoon, he for the first time voiced the actual state of his feelings.

"By hal, Lena," he trembled, rage almost choking him, "this tang got to stop purty dam' quick or, boss or no boss, I skall wring off his nack, for no mans skall take mine Trina, 'less I bane first dead." Then the frightened girl had begged and plead with him to respect the sacred person of the boss, no matter what happened.

"For," she said sadly, "he bane the big mans here. And why skall he not take her for his womans if he will? What womans can say 'No' to ham who has for pay every mont' one hunder and fifty dollar and so can make her plenty happy and satisfied? You bane poor mans, Olaf"—her tone was now argumentative—"and what could you do for girl like Trina, who wants new clothes twice or maybe tree times every year?"

For the moment this query staggered the giant, as it had never occurred to him that his love could aspire to the dress of a princess; but after some reflection he said with sullen obstinacy:

"Yes, I bane poor mans all right, but I am make forty-five dollar mont' and board; she can wait on chuck yust the same; and"—brightening at the easy solution—"she skall have all the forty-five dollar, which is 'nough for any dam' womans who ever lives."

Then in her desperation Lena tacked against the storm of the Mad One's changeless desire. Vainly did she try to point out to him the foolishness of imputing any serious intention to the light gallantries of the boss; but he answered doggedly:

"I bane watchin' him throw the love eye at Trina, so don't tank you skall make yackass out of me that way." And in high dudgeon at his sister's attempt to throw dust in his eyes he stalked huffily away.

Distressed and apprehensive as she was, she dared not say anything to the boss, for he might at once discharge her jealous brother and thereby precipitate the outbreak which she feared. But she was not altogether hopeless that all might not yet be well. Several times of late the captain had visited the kitchen after supper; and in her "good clothes" Lena felt a reasonable degree of confidence in her own attractions. And what if Trina was always in the way? Some subtle feminine intuition told the giant's sister that she it was who drew the captain from his cozy office rather than

the shallow coquette with whom he daily flirted at the table. But if she was never to be alone with him, how was he to ask the question she longed to hear?

And that night, after her talk with her brother, as she gazed with tear-dimmed eyes at the cold moon which crept up through the great pines that spread their sparkling emerald arms high above the glitter of the snow, she sighed drearily:

"I tank sometangs bane all wrong when the Lord, He yust same to go to sleep and let poor, hard-vorking girls like me have so much troubles."

But Knute soon had other more important things to consider than the tangled web that he had so blindly helped to weave. The next morning a large pump which partly drained the shaft was working badly, and the trouble had not been remedied when he took his seat for supper. He was a boss who made the mine's affairs his own, and having no spare pump he was much worried over the situation; a breakdown would soon flood the mine. For once he failed to respond to Trina's languishing glances, and the only smile that lighted his anxious face was given to Lena, who caught his eye as she peeked through the kitchen door; and so carried away was she by this special mark of favor that she stood dreaming until recalled to things mundane by the sharp voice of Mrs. Borgstrom.

"I tank if I was one homely girl," snapped the widow, "that I wouldn't let tangs burn up to be flirtatious with a mans who yust want to make a yoke of me."

Her pride deeply wounded, the outraged Lena's gray eyes flashed fire as she threw out the blackened contents of the frying-pan. Then with scarlet cheeks the ordinarily self-contained girl astonished her irate mistress by passionately asserting that she considered herself fully as good-looking as some one who made more pretensions to beauty. "But yust spends her time"—her feminine claws were now extended to their full length—"fishing for a mans who don't want her for his womans at all, and is yust make fool of her same as she bane doin' with my brudder."

There was no mistaking her meaning and for a minute the amazed widow stared at her speechless, then she gasped:

"I tank, Lena, you haf gone crazy same as Olaf; but"—meaningly—"I skall see that you haf 'nough to do so you will get cured quick."

Then further bickering was ended by several quick blasts from the boiler-whistle, which instantly apprised every one that there was serious trouble at the mine; and in another second every soul in the house had responded to the alarm. Mad Olaf and Trina scurried along in the rear of the racers when presently the girl stumbled. Turning at her call, the giant picked her up as if she were a newly fallen snowflake.

"My ankle is twist so it hurt too bad to walk," she wailed; and the next instant Trina was in the Mad One's arms, who, forgetful of everything but his consuming passion, wildly poured forth his protestations of love in his native tongue. But true to the flirt's nature she could not forego playing with him a little longer, although she intended ultimately to surrender.

"Why skall I take a poor mans when mebbe the boss, he want me for his womans, too?" she asked provokingly.

Enraged by her answer Olaf swore a terrible Norwegian oath, then in anger tossed the coquette into the deep, soft snow and dashed on, leaving the frightened girl to crawl out as best she could. This she accomplished with some little difficulty, but her lover's ungallant action had filled her heart with pride and joy; for with the strange reasoning of many women of her class *that* was but another convincing proof of his love; and had he actually beaten her she would have nursed her wounds and gloried in them, too, if she was sure that the blows were inspired by jealousy of another man. But she was so possessed by the imp of the perverse that, as she limped along, she determined at once to "get even." For a time, however, her thoughts were turned into other channels.

"It's no use to try to fix her, Yim," the captain said as she opened the door of the engine-house, "for the cylinder is bust wide open, and she's no good." He turned his head as Trina stepped in, then twisting his blond mustache he stared thoughtfully at the boiler's Tamarack blaze which ruddied the swarthy faces of the dull-eyed men standing about him.

To Knute the mine meant everything. Each day he had been showing up more and more high-grade ore. If he could keep things running in good shape until the railroad was finished, he believed that he would be permanently retained. But he was equally certain that if the mine was flooded—even though it was caused by the company's failure to furnish requested extras—he would be cast adrift with a reputation that would practically black-list him for any position of responsibility; and he had been a common miner as long as he intended to be, if any risk would save him from it.

At last he reached a decision and said sharply:

"Harness up, boys, for we got to hustle to the Diamond and borrow a pump." But no one moved to carry out his orders. Instead they stood with stolid, rebellious eyes staring at him like so many animals.

"Why don't you get a move on?" exclaimed the angry boss. "Don't you know the drifts bane soon fill up 'less we get to throwin' out more water?"

"Ya-as, we know that all right 'nough, boss," answered one of the men, "but, by dam, I bane hired for miner, not to be eat up alive by wolves. No, I skall lose my yob first."

The danger was a very real one, as Knute well knew. And a momentary flash of his anxious eyes at the unyielding faces told him that further orders were useless.

All of them were low-class Huns or Poles, except Olaf, who had stood frowningly staring at the roaring fire as if his small brain wrestled with some tremendous problem. Once or twice he had glanced at the captain, then at Trina; and each time his brow furrowed more deeply. Physically the giant was afraid of nothing; and under ordinary conditions he would have risked his life without giving the matter a second thought; but now some devil cunningly whispered that if the boss went alone he would never come back. So Olaf scowled, and scowled, and said—nothing.

A full half-hour of precious time had been lost, and the water was rising, ever rising up the shaft to untimbered levels. The thought was agony to the now almost distracted captain, who if a small man was a brave one. Then raising his blond head he sneered:

"You all bane yallow dog to stand here and let the mine flood; but"—his trim figure straightened proudly—"I bane a man. Go harness up," he shouted, pointing a slender hand at one of the men, "or," snatching up an ax at the man's hesitation, "by God, I skall brain you right har!"

The frightened miner sprang for the door, which was at that instant thrown open and the astonished crowd heard Lena, who had unnoticed quietly left the engine-house at the first refusal of the men to venture on the dangerous journey, call out almost gaily:

"The team bane already harnessed and everytang is all right to start."

To the even greater astonishment of every one, she wore a heavy bearskin coat and was so hooded in preparation for the cold that only a stray lock of her thick brown hair and her shining, steadfast gray eyes were visible. Olaf glanced questioningly at his sister, then said half-dazedly:

"What the hal you tank you goin' to do, Lena?"

Her mittened hand pushed back the wandering tress as she glanced contemptuously at the now huddled cravens, then she gave oral evidence of her thought.

"The mens all bane such 'fraid babies that womans must bane mens to-night, so I skall drive for the boss mineself."

The look of thankfulness and admiration that Knute gave her caused Lena's soul to sing within her, and she felt herself already rewarded even should she

lose her life; for if one met death the other must, and what more could woman ask than to die with her heart's love? When the captain found voice sufficient to speak he said with deep feeling always so difficult for him to express:

"You bane brave womans all right, Lena; but I can't let you go 'long. No, I can't tank of doin' it, and I skall go alone."

But she only shook her head and looked scornfully at Olaf.

"Every mans here is coward; but I bane awful shamed to have the biggest one for my brudder. I always tank before that you was brave man, but now I know you are only yust a brag one."

Then she walked quickly toward the door. Before she reached it she was stopped by the giant, who stood with his brawny shoulders thrown back as if defying all the world to assault his six feet seven of iron muscle and ponderous bone.

"By hal," his hoarse growl resounded like the bellow of a bull, "I bane no cowards, and only a womans skall dare tell me so. Take off dem tangs, for I skall go mineself."

A relieved and thankful look came to the captain's care-worn and anxious face; but something in her brother's narrowed eyes frightened Lena and cemented her determination to go. Olaf protested strenuously against her expressed purpose but, ably seconded by the boss though he was, it all proved of no effect, for she obstinately held her ground. And with bad grace the giant at last succumbed to the inevitable by saying testily:

"I tank you bane dam fool womans when you got nothing to make by goin' 'long, for mebbe the wolves will have you eat up in yust hour or so."

But if the thick-headed Olaf did not understand what his sister hoped to gain, the more astute Trina did; for, with woman's quicker apprehension in such matters, she knew that Lena was staking her life to win the boss. Impelled by her lover's decision to accompany the captain, her first impulse had been to at once make up with him; but here was a chance to even up, and she might also have the added pleasure of spiking Lena's guns as well. But perhaps Olaf would never come back. The thought startled her, and the light-headed girl hesitated. Then the coquette conquered the woman. Smiling bewilderingly on Knute, she said softly:

"If I have not hurt my foot so bad I skall go, too." And the foolish Knute from very force of habit could not refrain from returning her sentimental glance. This silly performance so enraged the Mad One that all thought of apologizing for his brutality instantly vanished. Springing through the open door he bellowed in angry impatience at further delay:

"Come on! If we bane goin' to feed the wolves let's get a move."

A flush of indignation had swept over Lena, too, at the artful, hollow words of Trina, and as she passed the malicious little flirt she eased her mind by whispering:

"Trina, you bane a—a cats to so play with mine brudder."

"I tank, Lena, you have your mad up more 'count of your ownself than 'bout Olaf," came the quick, tantalizing laugh. At this sharp feminine thrust the guiltily blushing girl abandoned any further wordy encounter with her keener-witted antagonist and hurried to the sled. And a few minutes later, with guns and axes conveniently at hand, the trio had started on their perilous trip.

As she hobbled to the kitchen Trina watched the disappearing sled as it crunched along the icy wood-trail to the Diamond road, which turned sharply to the left a short hundred yards beyond the clearing. As the grinding shadow was swallowed up in the gloom of the forest she said with a nervous little jerk at her shawl:

"I bane most sorry I ain't made up with Olaf." Then she laughed lightly. "But Yiminy! I bane tickled when I tank of Lena."

But the object of her mirth who, when she offered her services for the dangerous mission, was one palpitating pulsation of plump, hopeful happiness, was now almost as miserable as her moping brother who curled in the straw at

the rear of the sled. And now, too, the big black mules were wallowing through the three feet of untracked snow, which wound its way beneath the green of the tall, smooth-barked Norway pines that so shadowed the unused road from the chill moonlight that it seemed more like a tunnel with the top removed than a public highway.

When it is fifty degrees below zero the very air is frozen into rest, and the stillness of the great woods becomes curiously oppressive; almost unbearably so, broken, if it be, intermittently by the sharp, riflelike snap of some forest monster as it splits explosively under the tremendous pressure of the freezing sap, which the trunk has refused to yield to the great roots hidden far below. At one sharp report, Lena, startled from meditation, whispered softly from her seat beside the driver:

"I bane all of a 'fraidness so that I tremble in mine heart every time I hear the noise like a gun." And if she snuggled a little closer to the captain in an apparent desire for protection and sympathy, or if her statement was but a mere feminine ruse to attract his wandering thoughts to herself, who can blame her? What the gallant boss may have said or done to cheer her is not for us, but had her sulky brother been looking he might have seen the arm of the man of whom he was thinking so darkly slip quickly away from the waist of his plump sister when, an hour later, the sled drew up in front of the office at the Diamond.

Not a wolf had they seen or heard, and Knute was in a very cheerful state of mind when, within twenty minutes, he again occupied the spring seat with Lena. The coveted pump walled them from the giant, who once more buried himself in the straw and was apparently soon asleep. His oblivion to passing events was entirely satisfactory to the whispering couple; and so much interested did they become in thus exchanging confidences that they took no note of progress until within a scant mile from home. Then the boss rested his arm by pointing at a towering blackened, white pine which, spectrallike, stood with naked wide-stretched arms a few rods ahead of them.

"It bane only little ways to the woods road," he said gaily, "and no sign of wolf yet, so I tank we was good deal scared 'bout nothing." And Lena, who had entire confidence in the captain's judgment, nestled to his side, and again her light laughter floated out musically on the nipping, frost-stilled air.

But hardly had Knute got the lines conveniently in hand before a long, nerve-racking howl rudely woke them from fancied security. Then Olaf's big voice was heard, and curiously enough, there was an almost pleased note in his heavy tone:

"By hal, I tank we bane goin' to have some fun all right. Look!"

Turning their heads they saw a few hundred feet back of them a half-dozen gray ghosts which moved like shadows toward them. Not a sound had the noiseless trailers made until now, when, emboldened by the reenforcement signal, they answered briefly as they came cautiously but determinedly along. That the situation was fast becoming dangerous was realized by all, for the howl from the timber proved that those behind had hungry brothers lurking near.

Reins in hand, Lena now knelt upon the straw while the boss stood behind the seat ready to shoot down any starving brute which might spring out upon the frightened mules which were now plunging in a desperate but vain attempt to free themselves from the heavy-dragging load. Winchester in hand, Olaf guarded the rear, and in convenient reach he had placed a ponderous, double-bitted ax.

The next minute the pursuing pack was but a bare fifty yards from its hoped-for prey, then from the cover of a protecting thicket two gaunt forms leaped out upon the swerving mules. Two charges of bird-shot—all that the camp afforded—from the captain's gun stopped these marauders, which, though not killed, were so badly injured that they made for shelter.

This repulse at the opening of hostilities checked the oncomers, now strengthened by a new recruit. Squat-

ted on their thin but sinewy haunches they threw up their lean, hungry noses and yelped vociferously as if calling for assistance or noisily quarreling as to the advisability of pursuing and disposing of their wounded brothers.

"Only one quarter-mile to the trail, Lena; then the mules can run and will make the clearing in two minutes," cheered the hopeful Knute.

But the pack had decided to dine on tenderer morsels than tough, hairy hides and bones; and it now broke into a long, slow lope which brought it threateningly along. As there seemed to be small danger from the front the boss at once joined the giant.

"If we make the woods road"—the captain's tone was faintly inquiring—"we bane all right; and 'less more get in purty quick I tank we skall stand 'em off."

"Mebbe so; mebbe not; but yust the same har they come." Olaf's booming voice rang with the excitement of anticipated conflict. Then the roar of shotgun blending with the more spiteful crack of rifle told that the battle was on.

The jerking sled sent shots astray, but a yelp of pain proved that one at least had found its mark. At the fusillade the wolves hesitated, and at the instant the mules struck solid footing on the wood road. Bounding forward, they swung sharply to the right.

As the sled canted suddenly to the left Lena turned her head as her giant brother lurched heavily against the captain, who shot out of the sleigh-box as if fired from a mortar. Crashing against the trunk of a big birch the unfortunate man rolled into the trail as though stunned by the blow.

And before the terrified girl could stop them the galloping mules were a hundred feet distant from the motionless figure of the man she loved. Paralyzed with fright, for the instant Lena could not speak. Whether the mishap was accidental or otherwise she was sure she heard Olaf mutter:

"By hal, I tank Trina will not want what they leave of you!"

And certain it was that her brother showed no intention of making any attempt to save the captain, whose horrible death seemed now but a matter of moments. The pack had stopped at sight of the black, furred object which had been apparently hurled out for them, and were sniffing suspiciously as if fearing some suspected but unknown danger.

But now with widespread nostrils and ears apprehensively alert, one of them moved slowly toward the inert boss. Lena's first impulse had been to seize an ax lying at her feet and spring to his rescue, but her lightning-working mind told her that her brother would surely stop her. But the inspiration flashed to her brain which she knew would make Olaf act, if he could be reached at all.

"What a big coward mine brudder is," she cried, "for he will stay safe in the sled and let the mans who wants me for his womans be eated alive!"

Her astounding words had an electrical effect on the giant. Excitedly seizing her by the shoulders, he exclaimed half-doubtingly:

"If I tank that is so, by hal, Lena, I will get him or I skall never see Trina no more."

"It is so," she sobbed. "He yust ask me to-night. Hurry, bruder! Hurry, or you bane too late!"

But before she had finished he was running at full speed toward the boss, his mighty ax flashing threateningly in the white light at every giant stride. At his sudden dash the advancing wolf retreated to the pack, which stood irresolute until he was at the captain's side.

As Olaf bent over him Knute's dazed eyes looked into his face, then Mad Olaf swung the still helpless man to his shoulder as if he were a sack of meal and, now closely followed by the snarling pack, he made his way in safety to the sled. As he dropped his burden on the straw a steel-trap snap at his heels caused him to turn with uplifted blade which whistled hungrily as it reddened its way through the beast's lean shoulders.

Then from the trailers a wolf sprang

at the straining mules which Lena could no longer control. And with bit in teeth they galloped for the camp but a quarter of a mile away, leaving the Mad One with a piece of sharpened steel to fight for his life—alone.

No longer to be denied, the pack rushed upon him. Now, even for a giant a battle with seven wolves is hardly to be regarded as a joke by sane people, but the great, dull-brained hulk, as he swung his bloody ax, yelled shrilly as if a wild and uncanny joy possessed him at this supreme test of strength.

"By hal," he bellowed, "I tank this look like dam gude fight." And as the eager steel once more found a mark he roared delightedly: "By Yiminy, Trina, I wish you was set up in tree to see what kind of mans skall have you for his womans when he wins."

And of this he seemed to have no doubt as his wild laugh testified when his blade deepened its color by cleaving its way through the skull of its third victim. But now two of the maddened brutes were at his back; another fastened itself upon his side as the fourth sprang for his throat. Again the steel swished, but the blow fell short and the precious blade slipped from his numb fingers. Vainly he struggled to regain it, but four ravenous timber-wolves tearing at a man, giant if he be, are no light load, and it was now hand-to-tooth.

His great height saved his throat, but slavering fangs tore the straining shoulder of the hard-breathing Hercules; but this spoiler's taste of blood was its undoing. A huge hand grasped its neck, another caught the loose-hanging flank; then a powerful wrench followed by the sharp snap of a broken back, and Olaf laughed again as his mighty arms hurled the snarling, impotent thing far out into the snow.

Only three to conquer; yes, four, for down the wood road bounded another as if it hurried to be in at the death. As his bloodshot eyes saw it, Mad Olaf's dauntless spirit sank. Fast becoming exhausted, he was carried to his knees. Murderously the white teeth cut their lancelike gashes in his weakened muscles as he struggled staggeringly to his feet.

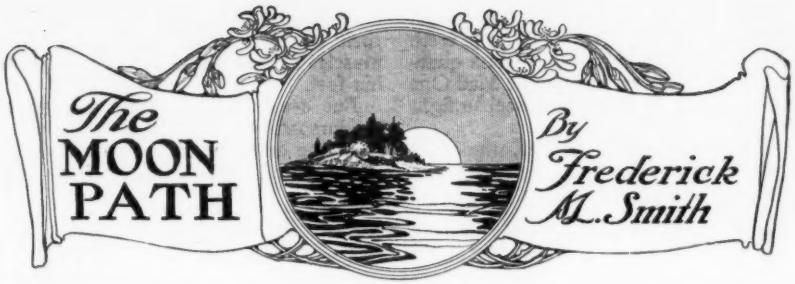
But even a giant cannot accomplish the impossible, and he glanced hopelessly at the oncoming animal which, with ears pointed, stopped suddenly as if it listened.

Then the sound of galloping hoofs reached Olaf's tense ear-drums. A second later, lashed by the hand of the revived boss, the mules dashed into sight. Vitalized by the stimulant of returning hope, the quickened sinews shot out the giant's great fists with pile-driver force and the cracking ribs of his gray assailers proved their effective power. Five seconds of the last desperate round had hardly ticked when the roar of the shotgun, fired at pointblank range, put out the last two four-footed fighters.

As Olaf limped toward the sled the boss tried to express his gratitude. But the big fellow stopped him with a torrent of almost incoherent words; pouring out all the jealousy and anguish which the rosy, blue-eyed Trina's coquetries had caused him. Brokenly he confessed that Knute's fall was not an accident; and that he would have left him to the wolves had his sister not told him she was to be "his womans."

And now they reached the sled. There sat Lena quietly holding the reins, though she gazed solicitously at the two men. Knute glanced quickly at her apparently composed figure, then a low whistle escaped his lips. No matter if he had murmured tender words in the cold light of the northern moon, or in the deep shadow of the great pines, he had not definitely committed himself. For the fraction of a second he hesitated, then further vacillation ended. Grasping the giant's great paw, he exclaimed in a tone which left no doubt as to his sincerity:

"Well, by hal, I bane mighty glad she told you; for if the bravest womans there bane in the world had keep her mouth shut, I skall never have the best dam mans that ever step on Mesabi for my brudder-in-law."



DOWN at the pier of the city boat-house a young woman stood looking across the blue lake at a white blot that was fast disappearing into the cool, gray east. She was not a very young woman—about twenty-eight or so—slenderly pretty, with fluffy, light hair that had one or two threads of gray at the temples. What you noticed most about her were her eyes, which were fine blue, clear and far-seeing, like those of men who go down to the sea in ships.

As she half turned shoreward a young man came along the pier with a basket on his arm. He did not look at her, he was so intent on the vanishing white blot. Jerking out his watch he frowned at it; then in a tone that left no doubt of his meaning, he said: "Damn!"

As it escaped him his eyes took in the other figure on the pier. "Miss Nelson," he stammered, "I beg your pardon; but you see I just had to have that boat. They're up to their old tricks of leaving whenever they get ready."

The girl laughed. "Please say it again for me. I just had to have it, too."

"Yes, but now I've got to go over in a rowboat. If I don't get to our island there'll be no breakfast in camp. They are depending on me for supplies."

"You're going to row those seven miles?"

"That's nothing. I can do it in less than two hours with the water this way."

She looked approvingly at his broad shoulders, his square, clean-shaven jaw. "That's it. Make me sorry that I'm a woman. Of course it's nothing to you that you're left. You take things in your own hands and do as you wish to, boat or no boat. But I stand here and wring my hands in despair."

Her smile was so little suggestive of despair that he grinned appreciatively. "And where are you going?" he put to her.

"To Pleasant Beach."

"Oh, that's all right. I'll take you. It's hardly at all out of my way, you know. You'll get there almost as soon as the *Perkins*, for that goes all the way around the lake first."

Her eyes widened delightedly. "Oh, wouldn't it be too much trouble?"

"Trouble? Why, it's only decent of you to keep me company."

He put down the basket of provisions and went back to the boat-house, from which he emerged presently, sliding a clinker-boat down the rollers into the water. A boatman helped put in some boxes, and the young woman disposed herself in the stern. In five minutes they had cleared the pier, and the little craft was cutting with a laughing gurgle into the blue, smooth water of the lake.

Behind them on the bluff the town lifted its towers and spires against the yellow sunset. In front, in the far distance, was a short line of pale green on which lights presently began to blink; and as twilight thickened there appeared at one point a faint golden glow, as of a fire burning behind the hills.

"Are you in a hurry?" asked the man.

"I wanted to get there in time for a lecture if I could."

"I remember; there's a Chautauqua this week. Of course it wouldn't do to miss that."

There was a suspicion of irony in his tone and she rose to it. "You needn't rub it in. You ought to know there's a county institute, and that as I'm a school-teacher I have to be on hand. You mustn't suppose I'd go of my own free will when I might be doing something really worth while, like sitting on a rail-fence watching the sunset, or drifting about on the lake."

"Then you'd rather loaf and invite your soul in the open than drink in culture?"

"I detest culture," she laughed.

He grinned again. Miss Nelson was a distinctly more promising person than he had thought.

For a time there was silence, enhanced by the steady click of the oars. Suddenly the girl leaned forward eagerly. "Look," she whispered, indicating the point in the heaven where the fire had threatened. And the oarsman turned to see the great, yellow face of the full moon crawling above the horizon. A moment later they lay in a band of light that stretched away like a path of pure gold on the water.

He swung the boat sidewise and let it drift. Neither of the two spoke. The mystery of the night took possession of them. All about was the warm silence of the water; at intervals it was broken by the plash of a leaping fish; from some near but unseen shore they heard a heron croak. The shadow of a bat wavered in the air above them. Floating there on the face of the waters, they seemed isolated from all the rest of the world. And as they were cut off from it they were drawn nearer to each other. Though till now they had been, except in a superficial way, strangers.

Hilda Nelson knew Robert Branch of course, and Robert Branch knew Hilda Nelson. They had gone to the same school as children, and had struggled with the same Harvey's Grammar. But the Branches, being an "old family" and leading citizens, had little social intercourse with the Nelsons, who were but one generation removed from immigrants.

Then, the elder Branch was a banker and the elder Nelson a mechanic. To be sure, the latter was a man of substance, but with Germanic prudence he did not parade it; and his daughter went to the State University and became, in the natural process of Middle-Western evolution, a school-teacher.

On the other hand young Branch went East to college, and after four years there and a year in Germany came back home to practise law. With perfunctory politeness he continued to bow to Miss Nelson when they met. That was all. But womanlike, she knew more of him. She read in the papers of his hunting trips in the far West and of his canoe journeys to Canada.

It pleased her now, after all these years, to be able to meet him on common ground; for, like a touch of magic, the mystery of the night made them comrades.

"Isn't it good?" she breathed, divining that he would understand and sympathize.

"Yes," he answered as he swung the boat back on its course. "There's nothing like the wonder of the night outdoors."

"Do you know how it affects me?" she went on. "I want to throw over all my every-day, ordinary life and go wandering. I want to follow the moon-path to the end of the world. I suppose I'm a cotton-spinner on the surface, but down in my heart I don't believe I am."

He looked through the gray shadow at her poised body, her face lifted to the night, her hair fluffing in the wind. "I suppose in reality you're a viking's daughter," he submitted.

"My grandfather came from Norway, you know. He was a fisherman; and I think I have some of his sea-blood in my veins. Sometimes I'm actually tempted to throw up my job and go adventuring."

"You would really like to rough it?"

"In my most inspired moments I think I'd like to be a gipsy."

"See here," he bantered, "I'm not sure that I ought to leave you at this Chautauqua place. A woman who likes the open oughtn't to have to go and listen to a college professor lecture on Browning and Pestalozzi. That's what they do lecture on, isn't it?"

"I don't think she ought, either, but our minister is a member of the school-board, and a terribly serious person. I'm going to stay at their cottage, and if I don't turn up I'll be looked on as a renegade. But between you and me it's a bore."

"It's plain I ought not to leave you. I suppose one solution would be for me to carry you off."

"Oh, of course—if you were to do that," she laughed. "I suppose you think I'm silly," she added after a minute.

"You're the sanest young woman I've struck lately. Go on."

"No, I'm not going to rail; that's stupid. I'm just going to enjoy this." She averted her eyes, and sat looking longingly up the moon-path.

The silence enfolded them again. Each was brought face to face with his own thoughts. The girl, who lived much in dreams, saw them for a flash of time realized; the man, to whom the world had given when he asked, was suddenly conscious of a strange lack in his life which this moment was making more evident.

A point of land came out of the gray of the night—a point spangled with the lights of cottages.

"That's the Beach," sighed the girl.

"Well, I'm not going to leave you," he said firmly. "I'm going to take you to our island. My sister will be very glad to have you. There's nobody there now except her and my brother-in-law, and there's plenty of room. You must have one night among our pines. You'll like that."

"If I only could."

"And why can't you? You can go to the Beach to-morrow on the first boat."

"But if I don't get there to-night they'll telephone to town, and I'll be unaccounted for."

"We'll stop and tell them."

"Worse and worse! I can see the eyes of everybody. 'Going across the lake with Robert Branch! Horrors!'"

"Am I so terrible as that?"

"They are."

"But surely——"

"You never can understand how serious we are," she interjected. "Everything must count; we are supposed to think of nothing but child-study, and culture, and ethical and social problems, and literature with a big L. The gentle art of loafing is a thing heretical."

"Hang it!" he muttered. "I know you oughtn't to stop. Suppose I simply refuse to land you? What would you do? You can be a viking's daughter for one night."

"But the vikings didn't have telephones," she remarked naively. "There's the pier now, the one with the red lantern on it."

Branch laid a strong arm on his oar and steered the craft toward the light. At the side of it they discerned the figure of a man.

"It's Mr. Holloway," she whispered.

"I'm going to get you out of it," he said. "It's your last chance to protest."

She was silent.

He thrust forward on the oars, holding the boat back about a hundred feet from the wharf. "Mr. Holloway!" he called.

"Hello!" came from the figure.

"This is Robert Branch. I saw Miss Nelson at the boat-house. She missed the *Perkins* and won't be along till morning. She wanted me to tell you not to worry."

"Thank you. Aren't you coming in?"

"I have to go on to camp with provisions."

"Then you'll want to hurry; the wind's freshening. I'm afraid we're going to have a blow. Good night."

"How did you dare?" she uttered as soon as they were out of ear-shot. But there was an unmistakable touch of triumph in her voice.

"It was you who dared," he answered.

"I really wanted to; and now I don't

care. This night's worth a thousand lectures."

He smiled at her earnestness. He had not imagined that there were young women who craved freedom as this one did.

"Do you think it's going to storm?" she asked, looking over her shoulder in the direction of the town, the lights of which had been blotted out by a cloud-bank that hung low over the bluff.

"We shall get in ahead of it," he assured her.

They passed a point of land and got into the center of the lake where the wind had full sweep and was blowing the waves to whitecaps. Their course was diagonal to the sea, and the boat began to toss dangerously. The man knew it meant a struggle, but a struggle was always worth while.

"Afraid?" he queried.

"Of course not," she denied indignantly. "I like it; it's life. Give me that extra oar. I can help you a little by steering."

He liked the eagerness of her tone, and the sure way in which she handled the oar—her body bent forward, tense, ready, alive. Yes, it was life, and he was conscious of a new pleasure in having her with him.

Another half-hour's pulling and a dim black shape spread out in front of them; a little later they came into the shadow of a bluff.

"This should be our island," he said. "But there's no light. They must have gone to bed. We'll make the pier, anyhow; it's somewhere here."

An unlooked-for feeling of loneliness suddenly seized the girl. The land loomed dark and silent; she could see the tops of the black pines tossing restlessly in the wind. A definite doubt laid hold on her. Had she been wise to come?

Branch rested on his oars and peered into the darkness under the bluff. The sea drove them in and they could hear the waves breaking on the rocks. "Show a light," he shouted. But the place was as silent as if it knew no inhabitant.

"You have missed the island," she ventured, giving voice to her fear.

"No," he replied positively, and swung in a little nearer. "Ah, there it is. Now hold her!" And she felt a quick balm of relief as he turned the boat's nose landward and with two giant swings shot her toward a beach by the side of a small wooden pier.

"Sit tight now," he commanded. And as the keel ground the sand he jumped out, grasped the bow, and ran the craft half-way out of the water. "Now, quick!" He gave her a hand as she stumbled out, and together they pulled the boat high and dry on the beach.

Again he shouted, but the waves drowned his voice. Picking up the basket and coats, they began to feel their way to the steps that were cut in the hillside.

"Keep hold of me," he ordered, and finding her hand in the darkness, he led her up the bluff.

At the top it was lighter and the girl could discern the white shapes of three tents set among the pines. He hulloaed again.

No answer.

"Curious. Wait here till I get them." He went toward the large tent calling, "John—Edna," as he pulled at the flap.

Silence.

Hilda caught at her breath. The tide of her fear and doubt surged back again in flood. She stood clutching the basket and coats as he disappeared in the tent. A match flared and she heard the rattle of a lantern. Still he did not speak; there were no other voices. It was not thirty seconds till he came out, but it seemed hours. The lantern was in one hand and a piece of paper in the other.

"Miss Nelson," he said quietly, "I'm afraid I've got you into it. Edna has gone. John was called into town unexpectedly by the last boat, and she was afraid to stay alone on the chance of my not coming."

"Then?"

"We are alone on the island." He handed her his sister's note.

"We can't go back," she submitted, and as if in answer a long billow broke resoundingly on the beach.

"It would be dangerous; the wind would be against us and it's getting worse every minute. I'm afraid it would be practically impossible. I'm sorry, I'm awfully sorry."

There was so much compunction in his tone that she at once came to his relief. "Don't take it that way. It isn't your fault. I know that." She put out her hand as she spoke, as if to show her entire confidence.

"Thank you," he said, grasping it. "You'll be quite comfortable. You'll have Edna's tent and you'll be able to catch the boat on its first round. Let me show you your house."

He went into the smaller tent and lighted another lantern which he suspended from the ridge-pole. "Now I'm going to make a fire and get a bite to eat." He motioned her to enter, and, as the flap dropped behind him, she turned to look about her.

The tent was floored and carpeted with warm rugs. Down the center ran a wire on which hung a calico curtain that could be drawn so as to make two separate apartments. Each contained a cot, and on one side were a small toilet-table and other evidences of a woman's tenantage. A little mirror at one end gave her sight of herself. The picture almost startled her. She was not the quiet young woman who had left town two hours before. The wind had whipped her face to the color of red roses, and her light hair was tossed and tangled to a fetching confusion. It came to her that she really did look like a viking's daughter.

As she hastily recoiled her hair she considered the situation. It was very simple and natural and harmless if one understood it; but if one didn't? And suppose the people at Pleasant Beach found out? Then with a determined toss of her head she put all that behind her. Whatever she felt she must not let Branch see that she was worried. She smiled at her image in the mirror. How young she looked. She wondered if she might not even be called beautiful.

In a place sheltered from the wind by some high boulders she found Branch laying the wood for a fire. "All right?" he asked as she appeared.

"Yes, and I'm going to enjoy being marooned."

"That's right," he answered heartily as he leaned over his wood with a match crackling in his fingers. A small blaze flickered among the twigs; a twisting gust of wind sent it licking up to the larger sticks; then the big wood caught.

He brought a steamer-chair and a rug for her; brought a can of biscuits and some figs; and hung a kettle above the fire for tea. Then he spread another rug and sat down on the ground where he could watch the blaze and where, too, he could see her face.

Her action through it all had rather pleased him. A lot of women would have doubted and wondered and made him and themselves uncomfortable. But she accepted the inevitable in the spirit of a true traveler, and trusted him like a comrade. He even wondered as he watched her if one might not call her beautiful.

On her part, Hilda Nelson was concerned half with dreams, half with reality. She sat with her elbows on her knees and her chin couched in her small palms. This was the sort of world she liked; these were the moments that seemed to her living. Suppose she had this kind of man for a husband—a man who answered her moods, a man who loved the green outdoor world as she did. The thought kindled her eyes to greater brightness; it sent a fire-flush to her cheeks. For the nonce she forgot that she was after all but an ordinary, hard-working every-day person who got her living by teaching school.

The wind called to her of open moors and of singing seas; the swaying pine-tops whispered of dusk forests; the crackling fire spoke of bivouacs under the quiet stars.

Over the hot tea they fell to talking softly.

"This is the proper end for every day," he said.

"Just," she answered.

"If you could have all your desires what would they be?" he asked.

She smiled fleetingly. "If you had asked me that this morning I would have said that I would be perfectly happy if I could be transferred to another building under a principal that I liked. But you have spoiled me. Only the trail winding through the timber and wood smoke at twilight will satisfy me now. Do you remember those verses of Kipling's?

"'Who hath smelt wood smoke at twilight?
Who hath heard the birch-log burning?
Who is quick to read the noises of the night?
Let him follow with the others, for the young men's feet are turning
To the camps of proved desire and known delight.'"

"Do you know that?" he exclaimed. "That's the very real thing. Kipling's a young man's poet."

"Oh, a young woman's, too, sometimes," she claimed.

"I'm going to Canada next week on a long canoe trip," he confided. "I believe you'd like that."

"Lucky!" she replied, without looking at him; for in the picturing fire she saw a stream winding through the timbered hills, a canoe drawn up on a pebbled shore, and the thin, gray column of smoke rising from the little fire.

The wind eddying round the rock sent a shower of sparks over them. The cloud-bank in the west had spread over the heaven and darkened the face of the moon. A drop of rain splashed on the girl's cheek; another struck the fire with a sizzle.

Branch jumped up. "And now the real storm," he said. "I'll look after the tent-ropes, and tie your flaps. I hope you'll sleep comfortably, and forgive me for getting you into this."

"You were long ago forgiven. Good night."

She went into her tent and heard him putting things to rights in his own. Loosening her frock, she put out the lantern and lay down. The wind was tugging at the tent-flaps; the trees moaned above her; the rain began to fall heavily, and soon was a ceaseless drum that lulled her to forgetfulness.

She did not know how long she had slept when she wakened with a start. The rain had almost stopped, but the gale seemed to have increased and the tent was rocking above her. But it was not this alone that had startled her; she was conscious of some unusual noise, a long groaning sigh and a crash. The feeling that something out of the ordinary had happened was sharply upon her. She called out to her companion in the neighboring tent.

Only the beating of the wind answered.

She sprang from her cot and lit the lantern, calling again peremptorily. She began to feel the fear again. They two were alone on the island. Suppose something *had* happened?

Fumblingly she undid the flaps and peered out. A flash of lightning showed a confused mass where Branch's tent had been. She ran out. By the intermittent flashes she could see that the noise that had wakened her had been the crash of a falling tree. One of the branches had swept the tent down; the wet canvas sagged in a heap around some object that had the effect of a bier.

She tore at it with her hands, but there was no place to make an entrance. Running back, she got a small knife that was lying on the toilet-table, and with that she succeeded in ripping a hole. The man did not move when she touched him, but she could feel that he was breathing. Getting the lantern, she sheltered it with her dress and knelt over him. There was a long scar on his temple where the broken ridge-pole had struck him. She scooped rain-drops from the wet canvas and dashed them in his face.

"Hello," he said, dreamily opening his eyes and putting his hand to his head.

"Can you move? Are you hurt anywhere but your head?"

He sat up and moved his arms and legs tentatively.

"A tree fell," she explained, laughing out hysterically in her relief at finding him so little injured.

"I'm all right, just a temporary knock-out," he assured her. "I'll be all

right in a minute." He got up and she supported him. Together they limped to her tent and he sank down on one of the cots. "Just let me get my breath. There's some brandy in a bottle on that shelf."

She administered the brandy and he lay back breathing deeply. She took his wrist in her fingers; the pulse was strong and regular. Then, with an almost simultaneous movement, each found the other's hand.

The gale seemed to have spent itself with the gust which overthrew the tree, for the wind died rapidly and the rain began again, but this time softly, gently, murmurously. Suddenly she found his wide eyes on hers. For a moment they stared; then he laughed.

"I'm afraid I gave you a fright. But I'm all right now, really. I've had plenty of knocks as hard in football." He sat up. "I'll go and make a bunk in the cook-tent."

"You can't. You must lie here. It would be foolish to exert yourself now. Please!" she added as he hesitated. And without waiting for his spoken protest she drew the curtain that partitioned the tent. "Do you think you can sleep?"

"Thank you. I don't need to play the invalid, but if you insist——"

"I do," she replied. "Good night."

It was not long before his regular breathing told her that he was asleep; but slumber was far from her own eyelids. A strange sense of elation had seized her. She was glad she had not gone to the Beach. What did it matter if they found out? She was glad she had been near when he needed her. The wild night had brought a thrill of something new into her humdrum life. It was good—good! And the rain beat with a steady susurrus on the tent's roof.

A wood-pewee singing in the oaks in front of the camp wakened her. She was alone in the tent; outside she heard the cheery snapping of a fire. A pail of water stood just under the curtain. She washed, and coiled her hair hastily. As she looked at herself in the mirror she was suddenly and annoyingly conscious that daylight made a difference; there were lines in her forehead and she could see the white hairs.

Outside she found a blue sky and a blue lake. The air was clean, and from the trees behind the tent came the sweet fragrance of the forest. A pair of woodpewees were calling to each other from adjacent trees; a downy woodpecker tapped industriously at a dead stub; and from the beach below came the "peet-weet" of a spotted sandpiper. The fire burned in a niche by the boulder, over it a coffee-pot was steaming, and Branch was laying a little table near-by.

But somehow she felt that the place was not the same. There had been an enticing quality of romance about the affair in the moonlight, but the sun put such a different complexion on things. It had all been a pleasant dream, but a dream as fleeting as the moon-path.

Branch was not the man of the night before; he was the young gentleman who always bowed to her on the street. And she was a serious-minded schoolteacher tied to a Chautauqua. So when he turned at her light footstep it was the formal Miss Nelson that he saw.

"I hurried breakfast because I knew you wouldn't forgive me if I let you miss the boat. You're to sit there."

"I meant to be first up. You are sure you are all right?"

"Perfectly." He slid a rasher of bacon from the fire and sat down opposite her. "But it was mighty lucky for me that you were here."

"I believe you planned it just to give me more of an adventure," she said.

"And in 'the cold gray dawn of the morning after' do you regret the adventure?"

"No, I don't regret it," said she. "One lump or two?"

"Two."

She handed him his cup and he stirred the beverage assiduously without looking at her. "I have a scheme," he said finally. "You know I'm a bit of a politician? And it just happens that the superintendent of schools is under obligations to my father."

"Oh," she wondered.

"I could get you transferred to the building you like without any difficulty."

"You must not think of it," she objected. "I believe you feel a sense of obligation, and I thought better of you."

He smiled at her protest. "Then understand," he said quietly, "that I won't acknowledge the slightest obligation; we were comrades of the wilderness last night, and there people meet on an even footing; what you did you had to do, and I to accept. And what I'm saying has nothing to do with that."

"I know it," she answered, "and I beg your pardon."

"I was saying," he went on, and this time she caught a slightly quizzical look in his eyes, "I was saying that I *could* get you transferred, but I'm hoping I can make you see it the way I do, and that you'll be willing to prolong the adventure. I'm wondering if you'll let me carry you off to the Canadian wilderness next week?"

For an instant she did not take his meaning.

"Do you know what you taught me last night?" he asked soberly.

"That a woman may be very foolish."

"That a man can't possibly enjoy life unless there's a woman of his own sort to enjoy it with him. Do you suppose you can trust me in the stern of the canoe?"

The crimson dyed her cheek as she leaned back and surveyed him doubtfully. "But not now. You can't be sure. Last night was a dream-time. We were moon-struck, and perhaps the mood was like the moon-path, a light on the water and then gone."

"The moon-path's the most stable thing in the world," he argued. "Wherever you are you see the path if you look toward the moon. And that's what love does in the world, isn't it—makes a path of gold if you'll only look toward it?"

"One should doubt the moods of the night."

"It's sunlight now," he submitted. "And mayn't a man be allowed to know the woman he loves whenever he finds her? Of course if you'd rather I waited and said this in a parlor under an electric light, why, I will. But last night I thought you knew; I thought you cared. If you don't——"

"I've been trying to tell myself I didn't care, because I was afraid——" She broke off, and there were mingled laughter and appeal in the eyes which turned their clear blueness on him for just a glance.

He leaned forward earnestly and his voice was low:

"'Do you know the blackened timber—do you know that racing stream
With the raw, right-angled log-jam at the end?
And the bar of sun-warmed shingle where a man may bask and dream
To the click of shod canoe-poles round the bend?
It is there that we are going with our rods and reels and traces,
To a silent, smoky Indian that we know—
To a couch of new-pulled hemlock with the starlight on our faces;
For the Red gods call us out and we must go.'"

His fingers closed over hers as he finished. "Are we going, Hilda?" he pleaded.

Her moist eyes flashed a smile to his. "You may not know it, but I am pretty good at handling a bow-paddle myself," she said.

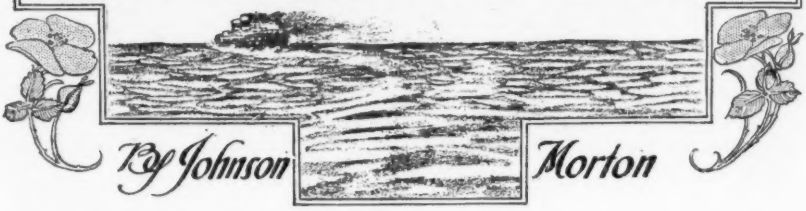
DISTANCE

I HAD a friend who went away
Over the distant sea.
But hill and tide can never hide
His gentle face from me.

I had a friend—he broke my heart,
Yet every shining day
We meet, but nevermore clasp hands—
How far he is away!

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.

MRS. MANTON WARING'S ANCESTRAL LACE



By Johnson Morton

"BUT, begging your pardon, madam, you did not reserve the whole cabin!"

The voice of the clerk came across the counter like a blow, from which Mrs. Manton Waring recoiled to stare at him in an astonishment so speechless that he found the silence embarrassing and hastened to bolster his position with details.

"Your deposit, begging your pardon, madam, covered but *one* berth, the lower in number thirteen." The clerk pointed a corroborative forefinger at a number on the diagram. Then, as Mrs. Waring gave no sign, his tone grew more placatory: "Begging your pardon, madam, no one can regret that there has been a mistake more than we, though it is not of our making. On the other hand, we may safely affirm that the room is one of the most comfortable on the *Nostalgia*, light, airy, and entirely commodious. Why, we have often put *four* passengers in it, madam, to their mutual pleasure and satisfaction, I assure you!"

Mrs. Waring opened her lips at this.

"That is out of the question," she began, "and I am very much annoyed because I am certain that I engaged the whole room, positively certain! Why, of *course* I did, for it never would occur to me that you *could* share a room with any one unless it were your husband or your child; and you see, I haven't any children and my husband went home last month because he has to be in America for the elections; and I thought I'd stay here—I've been paying some visits in the country—'til the last possible moment; and the *Nostalgia* is the only ship that will get me back in time for my cousin's wedding, and it's absolutely necessary that I should be there because we were brought up together as girls. So that *proves* that you *must* have made the mistake, after all," she added triumphantly, "and, of course, you'll rectify it at once—my husband always says that your system in England is perfect, and you certainly have the best policemen in the world. By changing all those people around, I'm perfectly sure they won't object if you explain it nicely, so that I may be quite by myself! Really, if you don't mind my saying so, *four* persons in a cabin isn't *decent!*"

"But, my dear madam, we have no intention whatever of putting more than *one* other person in number thirteen." The clerk leaned forward in eager explanation. "We deplore the mistake, but owing to the lateness of the day and the unexpectedly crowded condition of the boat, it is impossible to do better for you. I am sure that you will be quite comfortable, madam, with your roommate. A gentleman——"

"Sir!" interrupted Mrs. Manton Waring in mingled severity and horror.

The purple deepened on the other's middle-aged cheek, as this lurid suggestion of impropriety penetrated his British composure, and he coughed nervously.

"Begging your pardon, madam," he faltered, "I was only about to quote the —er—commendation of a gentleman

who once had the room. In your case, if you will allow me to explain, it is needless to say that the occupant of berth number one will be a lady like yourself, madam. I cannot give you her name, I am sorry to say, because most of our bookings are made at the company's central office. However," his voice quickened with relief as he became suddenly conscious of a long and impatient line behind his difficult patron, "if anything better can be arranged, rest assured that we will use our best efforts. We have your address, madam, and you may, with entire confidence, leave the matter in our hands."

So with these vague and glittering hopes Mrs. Waring was fain to depart content. But, alas, they bore no fruit; for, though during her remaining days in London she beset the office by telephone, telegraph, note and visitation; though she brought to bear upon the corporation the combined pressures of importunity, charm and influence, she found herself aboard the special boat-train for Liverpool in a still unsettled state of mind. Her pocketbook held only the ticket that entitled her to the lower berth in cabin number thirteen, and her eyes wandered furtively in search of that unknown and dreaded, but inevitable roommate.

Heaven grant that it be not the stout woman in the plaid waist who could be heard retailing her habits and customs in the next compartment.

"As for me, I never *pretend* to get up on board ship from the first day to the last! I just lie there and take medicine and have all my meals brought in. With my delicate nervous organization I'm weak as a rat, but I try to eat so as to keep up what little strength I have."

That strenuous person across the way would be quite as bad; a brown and sinewy female in spectacles and linen cuffs who sat with crossed legs, holding a copy of "Womanhood Militant" in a gnarled and ungloved hand.

But, most of all, the cheerful lady whom Mrs. Waring had noticed at Euston in the act of parting from some red-eyed and sobbing friends.

"Believe me, dear ones, it is all for the best," she had heard her say. "I must *refuse* to look on any but the bright side. So do not weep, but smile with me! I am going gladly to Clarence because he has a *claim* of gastritis, but if we truly wish to help him, we must look above, beyond all this, into the realm of the eternally sound and true!"

And yet her roommate might be any one of these three! Mrs. Waring's spirits sank to untried depths as the train neared the wharf. Her heart was heavy with blame; blame for her husband that he should have let her persuade him to leave her, and that he should have cabled in answer to her long and despairing message of the day before: "Cut wedding. Take later boat!" Blame, too, for the Halidon-Hawkses because they had insisted on her paying that last visit, and then more blame for her husband because he had allowed her to leave home without a maid. Vachot was at once so companionable and so protective!

It's all very well to say you are going to do your honeymoon over again after ten years, but, really, it isn't ever quite the same! Your dresses hadn't as many hooks, to begin with, and *then* your husband would never have thought of leaving you and going three thousand miles to attend primaries, whatever they may be!

Yes; it was all most disconcerting; and Mrs. Manton Waring, as she walked wearily across the bridge to the big steamer, felt herself almost indecently alone, a bit frightened, and yet a martyr of no small dimensions!

II.

By dinner-time, however, Mrs. Waring had recovered some quota of her usual spirits. For despite the purser's gruff assurance that there was no possible chance of her having the cabin to herself, the other occupant of number thirteen, whose name his books disclosed but vaguely as "Miss M. Smith," had failed thus far to materialize! And so, although the probability of that unwelcome lady's appearance at Queens-

town hung like a cloud on Mrs. Waring's horizon, its remoteness was sufficient to allow some blue in the nearer sky.

Several pleasant things had happened: Fruit, flowers, books and letters were awaiting her; there was even a long cablegram from her husband; and at the door of the dining-saloon she came suddenly upon a group of friends.

At home the presence of the Tony Ellerys, the Launcelot Buttresses and Brocky Valpy might not have been regarded by Mrs. Waring as making for entire satisfaction; but here she seized on the familiar hands with feelings of joyous intimacy.

"You dear things," she cried, as she clung now to sable and now to Persian lamb, "where did you come from? I was never so surprised in my life. What a *delight* and *relief* to find you all here! Yes; I'm quite alone. Don't you think it's *pathetic?* Manton simply *had* to go back and leave me; politics, you know. I suppose that comes of marrying an ambitious man. Oh, how *dear* of you, and I thank you so much. Of *course,* I'll sit with you if you're quite, quite sure there'll be room!"

They dined late at a pleasant little table, rose-laden and arranged for seven places, to the music of an orchestra that thrummed the "Merry Widow" and the "Valse Bleu."

Their voices rose gaily above the confusion and melody. Mrs. Ellery described, with much gesture, her dramatic adventures in the lairs of Parisian dressmakers; Mrs. Buttress, whose tastes ran in a less material mold, rehearsed musical experiences at Munich and Bayreuth; while their husbands divulged relays of fresh and amusing gossip from home on which Mrs. Waring fell eagerly.

But it was Brocky Valpy, who, coming in rather late and listening perfunctorily for a few moments, seized the first decent chance of interruption to spring what proved to be a genuine sensation.

"I say, you people," his eager voice broke in, as he turned to Mrs. Waring, "I've got a jolly good bit of news for you. Had it from a chap in the smoking-room, who says it's true right enough. Odd, isn't it, how a thing like that gets over a whole ship in less time than it takes to tell it? It seems that we have a runaway countess on board!"

"Continental or genuine?"

"Nonsense, old man, they knew a title would do the work for you."

"How deliciously mysterious!"

"Ah! but, Brocky, what is she running away *from?*"

It was only to the last question, put in Mrs. Buttress' deep voice, that Valpy deigned a reply.

"Why, the usual thing, I believe; hard-hearted parents, imminent danger of the ancestral dungeon and bread and water into the bargain! The cause is a young compatriot of ours, I'm told, a ranchman from the West, who wooed and won the earl's only daughter—you see, she's not *exactly* a countess, but the title's more effective—while on a visit in the neighborhood.

"So now, the lady, finding life insupportable without him, has, in some way, managed to elude her guardian and is, at the present moment, supposed to be on this very boat hurrying to her lover in the 'Wild and Woolly.' Really, the interesting thing about it all is that no one knows her even by sight. All you ladies are suspected, I'm told, with the odds in favor of Mrs. Waring, because she was seen coming aboard absolutely alone and holding her head in quite the grand manner!"

To the laughing conjectures that followed, Mrs. Waring made but small contribution, though she took care not to let her silence become noticeable. Through the rest of the dinner and the desultory games of bridge that followed during the evening, her mind was busy with conjectures of its own. These, by the time she was in bed, had taken on a shape at once logical and delightful.

And she fell asleep with an agreeable sense of expectancy that was realized when she awoke at early morning to find the boat motionless in the harbor of Queenstown. For it was entirely in accord with her expectation, that her steward, after a gentle knock at the

door, to which she made no response, should enter the cabin with his arms full of bags and packages. A slender figure in a long fur coat followed him, and after he had gone, stood for a moment at the glass.

From her highly unsatisfactory post of observation at the parting of the curtains of her berth, Mrs. Waring could not see "Miss M. Smith's" face; but she remarked at once that the lines of the lady's simple skirt and the fit of her slender high-heeled shoes bore the touch of the elect. Indeed, it was with difficulty that she restrained herself from throwing wide the impending hangings and projecting a sympathetic face.

"Do not be alarmed, my dear countess," she could fancy herself saying, "I know your sad story and I am your friend!"

III.

Although Mrs. Waring refrained from these actual words, when, a few hours later, she stopped before a certain chair on deck, her manner, a pleasing commingling of the deferential and the protective, indicated an unchanged attitude of mind.

"I hope you don't mind my looking you up and introducing myself." She smiled as she held out her hand. "I'm Mrs. Manton Waring, and I know that you're Miss Smith"—she allowed her voice to touch the name with a delicate suggestion of mystery—"because, although of course you thought I was asleep, I saw you this morning. We share the same cabin, you know, and I'm awfully sorry, for it must be quite as uncomfortable for *you* as it is for me! However," she went on after a moment's delay, during which, in response to the other's invitation, she had established herself in the adjoining chair and tucked a proffered rug about her knees, "I'm really not a bad person to be with, if only you are an early riser, because I *never* get up 'til late myself, and I think that we all ought to make concessions to one another, don't you? But it was stupid of the steamboat people to treat me so shabbily after I had really engaged the whole room, the English are usually so exact and businesslike, don't you think? Why, of *course,* I forget, you're English yourself, aren't you?" Mrs. Waring broke off suddenly with the interrogation-point.

Miss Smith shook her head, and turned a pair of merry gray eyes upon her. As she smiled, her short upper lip rose above teeth of indisputable prominence, and Mrs. Waring's confidence mounted simultaneously at this sure sign of aristocratic birth and breeding.

"Not English?" she asked in surprise.

This time Miss Smith laughed outright. "No, indeed," she declared, with some decision, "I'm *Irish!* Didn't you see that I came aboard at Queenstown, and if you listen, you're sure to hear the brogue of County Cork."

Mrs. Waring clapped her hands. "Oh, how perfectly delightful!" she cried. "Do you know, I never met a *lady* from Ireland before? Of course at home we have hosts and hosts of Irish—policemen and cooks and politicians and persons of that sort; they're awfully jolly, but not very *dependable,* my husband says. Oh, I hope I don't hurt your feelings by telling you this. And so we have to turn them into Americans just as fast as we can, so that we may get their votes, you know!

"But you people of the *other* sort are perfectly fascinating to read about, because you're all descended from kings and have O's before your names. Really, aren't you a good deal more like the French than the English? Vivacious, you know, and all that sort of thing?

"I've never forgotten a definition of the French in my geography. It's strange, isn't it, how you always remember the things that you've learned when you were young? Though, of course, with *me,* it isn't really so very long ago; nor with you, either, for that matter, though I didn't mean to put it just in that way.

"Now what *was* I talking about? Do you see that black thing in the water off there, a little to the left of that big wave? I thought it was a porpoise, but I believe it's just a shadow, after all! Oh, about the *French!* The defini-

tion that I spoke of called them 'a gay nation, fond of dancing and light wine.' Really, I suppose that would apply to the Irish quite as well, because you're both Celts, aren't you?

"Only I don't see how you *could* be gay with no Home Rule and those horrible landlords who are never there and the potato-crop always short; and you don't dance much, do you, unless it is the 'shillalah'? Or is that another name for a jaunting-car? I never *can* keep those things straight. And they all drink whisky, don't they; the muddy kind that you find the empty bottles of in the harness-room, after your coachman has left? But I'm rather *surprised* to find that you're not English, for I certainly *understood*——"

She hesitated a moment at Miss Smith's look of inquiry; then hastened to touch her arm reassuringly.

"I didn't quite mean to say that," she explained,"although, of course, one *does* discuss people somewhat, especially"—Mrs. Waring was choosing her words with care—"if they happen to be *distinguished!*

"Oh, you needn't look so surprised," she added audibly and shook her head as Miss Smith started to speak, "*for I know all about you and so do my friends!* I want you to meet them because Mrs. Buttress and Mrs. Ellery will be awfully nice people for you to see in America and there's an extra seat at our table—or at least there was last night—that you *must* take. We shall be enchanted to have you. Oh, there's Mrs. Buttress now coming on deck and the rest are just behind her!"

At one o'clock, introductions accomplished and acquaintance already established in an hour's conversation, the entire party found themselves at luncheon, "quite like a happy family," as Mrs. Waring put it with an almost affectionate glance at Miss Smith who occupied the seat of honor at Launcelot Buttress' right.

This arrangement, providing for the presence of the lady from Ireland, had been achieved only with difficulty. Indeed, the steward had demurred at first.

"There's an English lady, who didn't come in last night, what has had the seat assigned her," he declared, "and she's that decided, madam, I hate to move her about."

But the potent combination of masculine gold and feminine charm overrode his scruples, and Mrs. Waring, following his gesture, as the steward lingered for a moment by her chair, had the satisfaction of seeing convoyed, under evident protest, to a table occupied by commercial travelers at the other end of the saloon the selfsame strong-minded woman of the train whom, only yesterday, she had dreaded as a possible roommate.

She could scarcely stifle a cry of triumph and relief, and she turned to Miss Smith again with a sense of fresh emotion in which gratitude had suddenly added itself to the other ingredients.

IV.

As the days wore on, Miss Smith proved herself a delightful companion, in almost every direction. She was equally ready for a walk on deck or a gossip in a corner. She was at home with both bridge and knitting. She could smoke a cigarette and adhere to a rigid standard of morality at one and the same time, while her powers as a talker and as a listener held the just balance that marks the woman of tact. In fact, the only blemish on the perfection of her popularity with her newfound friends was the fact that the subject of her conversation was, all too seldom, herself. Even Mrs. Waring felt, at times, inclined to resent such reticence.

"I *confess* I'm disappointed," she declared in secret conclave to Mrs. Buttress, "because Miss Smith seems to *trust* us so little; disappointed both for our sake and her own! Really, though I hope I'm the last person to appear assuming, it's quite plain that we can be of the greatest help to her in case things go wrong, as it is entirely possible they may.

"Sometimes I am *worried!* As far as we can tell, her ladyship hasn't lain eyes

on that Westerner of hers for goodness knows how many months, and how can we be sure that she'll like him in New York as well as she did in England? Why, now I think of it, she's never told us that he *will* meet her in New York, and I dare say she'll have to go out to him to some forlorn little place in Idaho like those old maids who advertise! And men *are* different in different places, you know perfectly well!

"Besides it's quite possible," she went on gloomily, "that he may never meet her at all! Perhaps he's dangerously ill or even dead! There's been plenty of time for all sorts of terrible things to happen, and the West is *crowded* with dangers; mines full of water and cyclones and railway accidents and prairie fires and landslides and those wild cattle that stampede at night and trample you to death.

"Oh, it makes me quite creepy to think of all the possibilities; and really" —Mrs. Waring, yielding to the impulse, had already started to her feet—"I mean to go to the dear thing *at once* and beg her to be frank with me because we want to help her. Why there's no time to lose, for we shall be landing day after to-morrow! Poor child; she's lying down in our cabin, lonely and anxious no doubt. How *glad* she'll be to see *me!*"

But Mrs. Waring's purpose was deflected, for it was a humorously puzzled rather than an anxious look that Miss Smith, brave in a becoming pink wrapper and pillowed luxuriously on the lounge, turned toward her as she entered the cabin. Miss Smith held in her hand a long and formidable paper, which she had evidently been reading.

"Oh, is that you, dear Mrs. Waring?" she cried. There was relief in her tone. "I'm so glad you've come, for the steward has just brought in these strange things. There's one for you on your bed. I can't make mine out; perhaps you can explain it to me. It's all about paying duty on your clothes and I don't understand it; but it seems quite, quite —frightful!"

The accent of County Cork caressed this last word, as the speaker shuddered prettily. Mrs. Waring glanced at the paper and answered with the careless ease of the accomplished traveler.

"Oh, that's just your declaration for the custom-house," she explained, "a mere matter of form. My husband told me all about it, and, as I understand, it doesn't make the *least* difference whether you fill it out or not. Those horrible inspectors will go through your things anyway! Of course, it's all quite wrong, but you see we have to protect our own industries by paying duties, and that's the reason why America is such an expensive place to live in unless you never buy a single thing that isn't made there, which of course is quite out of the question."

"But shall I have to pay just because my clothes were not bought in America?" persisted Miss Smith.

Mrs. Waring moved her head judicially. "That *depends,*" she declared. "Of course if they're all made up and haven't any labels in them you won't; for who's going to know? But I've *heard,*" she added, with a hint of mystery, "that it's very hard to bring in such things as lengths of silk and pieces of lace and——"

Miss Smith threw up her hands with a gesture of despair.

"*Lace,* did you say, dear Mrs. Waring? Oh, this is terrible! I've got yards and yards of the most beautiful and valuable lace with me; real old Irish point! Whatever shall I do?"

Mrs. Waring was interested at once. "Lace!" she cried. "Oh, I *adore* lace! Do let me see it."

Miss Smith, already on her feet, was bending over her steamer-trunk. From its depths she produced a number of packages and spread their contents over the lounge.

Mrs. Waring's excitement was intense. She held piece after piece to the light with gestures and exclamations of delight. Then she drew a deep breath of satisfaction.

"And only to think that all this is *ancestral!*" she sighed.

Miss Smith's laugh had a hint of grimness. "That does me very little

good if I have to pay those terrible duties on it," she rejoined.

But Mrs. Waring made no reply. She seemed lost in contemplation, and although her fingers still touched the laces lovingly, her eyebrows had drawn themselves together in a frown that indicated the presence of some serious mental process behind them.

Miss Smith regarded her questioningly.

Suddenly Mrs. Waring's face cleared as if by magic. She seized both the other's hands in hers. "I have an *idea!*" she cried. "Please be sure that the door is locked and that nobody is listening," she added in a whisper, "for I've thought out a plan by which I think I can help you."

Miss Smith returned the pressure of her clasp with interest and then, borne out of her usual reserve by grateful emotion, suddenly kissed her on both cheeks!

V.

"After I got your telegram at quarantine"—Mrs. Waring resumed the conversation with her husband that she had begun at the luncheon-table, as they stood together before the crackling fire in the seclusion of her sitting-room.

"Of course, I didn't really *expect* you, though I looked everywhere for you and I wish you might have come, for the strangest thing happened that, for one moment, worried me dreadfully. You remember my speaking of the Irish lady who shared my cabin; the person who *called* herself 'Miss Smith'? Manton Waring, I'd done *everything* for that woman on the voyage because she seemed lonely and quite nice; and Brocky Valpy, and the Ellerys and the Buttresses, too, for that matter, *assured* me that she was an earl's daughter! She *insisted* on sitting at our table and really made herself rather agreeable; but *you never can tell!*"

"In itself that doesn't sound like much of a crime." Waring, with his arm about his wife's waist, smiled down at her. "What did she do?"

"Do! Why, Manton"—Mrs. Waring's voice sank to mystery—"she wasn't at all what she *pretended* to be!"

Waring laughed, but his wife ignored the interruption.

"She had come over here to marry some one—at least, she allowed everybody to think so. If I *had* any doubts all along events have certainly proved that I was right. You know, Manton, that the time just before landing is *hectic*. Our little party stood on deck together and we were all perfectly devoted to Miss Smith, I must say, giving her our addresses and offering her motors and luncheons and concert-tickets during her stay in town. She was awfully reserved; but I really didn't think much about it at the time, for her manners *were* good, say what you will.

"Of course, when we came up to the wharf, I was terribly excited, and I left the rest and ran all about the deck trying to see if *possibly* you weren't there, after all, among that crowd of queer-looking people waving handkerchiefs and little American flags from the doors and windows; and, by the time I'd given up trying to find you and had got back to the gangway, the Buttresses, the Ellerys and Miss Smith were already going ashore. Brocky Valpy stood waiting for me, and just as we started across, I saw a man in uniform touch his hat and speak to Miss Smith.

"'Look, look!' I cried to Brocky. 'Miss Smith's fiancé *has* come, after all! Isn't it *nice?* But you never told me that he was a naval officer!'

"'Why, I didn't know,' began Brocky. He never finished that sentence, Manton, for just then I saw Larry Buttress speaking very excitedly to the man, and Miss Smith seemed to be shaking her head and denying something, and a crowd collected at once, and the man in uniform walked off quickly with Miss Smith, actually holding her tight by the arm!

"'Run, run; *hurry!*' I cried to Brocky, by the time we were in the shed. 'And see what has happened!'

"When Brocky came back he was laughing and shrugging his shoulders in that silly way he has.

"'We've been made fools of,' he said.

" 'What on earth do you mean?' I interrupted.

" 'Why, that's no escaped countess that we've been harboring! That's not even Miss M. Smith! Her real name is *Murphy*, and she does come from Ireland; but she's known here in America as Madame Geneviève, the dressmaker. The inspectors have been on the lookout for her, because she's suspected of smuggling, and now they've taken her inside to look her over and, if I'm not mightily mistaken, they'll find the lace that they have reason to think she is bringing in, wrapped round her body under her clothes!'

"Oh, Manton, did you ever hear of such a disgraceful thing! Luckily Barker came up just then and said that you had sent him to help me—that was *dear* of you—and I got interested, of course, in finding my trunks and having them examined. My things went through all right, I'm thankful to say, but I didn't feel *safe*, really safe, until I got home and found *you*."

Waring looked puzzled.

"Safe? What do you mean by safe, Gussie?"

Mrs. Waring hung her head. Then she laughed self-consciously. "Oh, dear!" She hesitated. "I suppose I may as well—tell you!"

She bent an instant to lift the skirt of her gown. The motion disclosed a petticoat around which were sewn thickly rows and rows of "real old Irish point"!

"Now you mustn't say a word 'til I've explained," she warded off her husband's exclamation of dismay. "Really and truly, Manton, I only meant to do Miss Smith—I shall call her that to my dying day—a kindness! She was so distressed about those horrible duties that I said I'd help her out. She certainly gave me to understand that the lace was ancestral and then, you must remember that, at the time, I had every reason to think that she was the daughter of an earl!

"She deceived me, Manton, about everything, and the worst thing of all is that a horrid, mannish woman who never wore gloves and who might have sat at our table if it hadn't been for Miss Smith, turned out to be the person about whom the countess rumor started! She really *is* an Honorable Miss Something or other. Of course she didn't come here to elope—she's fifty if she's a day—but she's going to give lectures instead, and Mrs. Trontmann and several nice women that I know came to the dock to meet her, as a delegation from the Altruists' Club. I never, never heard of anything more annoying, and yet *you* are actually *laughing*, Manton!"

Waring took his wife in his arms and regarded her with a sort of whimsical severity. "But I wasn't laughing at what you think, Gussie; for smuggling is a rather serious matter. What do you mean to do with those ill-gotten gains of yours, you blessed baby? Have you made any plan as to their disposition? It seems to me that there's an ethical as well as a legal point involved."

Mrs. Waring smiled demurely, as with her hands against his breast she freed herself from his clasp.

"Please, please let me go," she begged.

Then, lifting her petticoat again, she tore the lace from its fastenings and, rolling the pieces into a ball with some effect of deliberation, tossed them lightly to her husband.

"Do?" she cried. "Why, *I* don't mean to do anything! See: I turn over the whole matter to *you!*"

Then, laughing, she ran to him and rested her cheek against his shoulder. She sighed deeply.

"Oh, I feel all right now!" Her voice was warm with satisfaction and content. "Manton, you *are* a ridiculous person! *Really*, when I have a husband who is a lawyer and a member of the legislature, why on earth *should* I ever bother myself with anything that's either *legal* or *ethical?*"

THE DRAW

By Fanny Kemble Johnson

SCARLET of cheek and sunlit-brown of hair and eye, little Brother clattered his square-toed shoes down to Bowler's, the corner store which furnished his street with the essentials of existence—thread at the iconoclastic price of six cents a spool, soap, chocolate pennies, round pans of warm rolls.

He watched Allie with anxious eyes as she put the thread into the smallest sized paper-bag and went to the glass case after the rolls. Would there be any pennies in the change? Though he had been going for two weeks to the Sisters in Cathedral Square he did not feel sufficiently advanced in mathematics to attempt this problem. Allie, quick, slim and graceful, had the loaf tied up now, and the chink of coin came to his ears where he stood with his brown head below the level of the counter.

"I bet I can guess what will become of these, Brother," said Allie. She leaned over and dropped them down one by one in the pink palm, four new, golden-bright pennies. That the pennies were the perquisites of Brother and his sister Rosy, Allie very well knew, and she had a reprehensible habit of giving five pennies in change when no other way offered.

Brother knew perfectly well that mother sat up-stairs writing letters, but he shrilled as he came in: "Muvver, where are you, muvver?"

She answered softly, of course, with something between a Swiss yodel and a Southern ferry-call, and he advanced to the foot of the steps.

"Muvver?"

"Yes, you sweet thing."

"I *delicious* you, muvver."

Rosy, the one person who had, so far, failed to succumb to Brother's attractive personality, here interposed. "Make him stop his foolishness, and come on up," she commanded.

Brother flew with open arms to mother and embraced her ardently, after which he gave Rosy her two pennies.

"Muvver, muvver, make him go straight to Bowler's and get me some licorice shoe-string."

"No," said mother, "you can't have those dreadful things."

"Some chocolate men, then."

"Muvver," said Brother, ignoring her, "can I go to Abby Farr's?"

"Won't Bowler's do?" asked mother, scribbling again at her letter.

Brother shook his brown head. "There ain't any draws down at Bowler's."

"All right," agreed mother, "make haste back."

"Wosy, can't I spend your penny at Abby Farr's?"

"No, wait till you come back, and go to Bowler's. Abby Farr hasn't got good things."

"Wosy's silly, ain't she, muvver?"

"He says *ain't.*" Rosy's scorn was intense.

"Children," pleaded mother, "I'll *never* get this in the mail."

Brother embraced her again, pulling down her hair, and blotting her letter; but the kiss was worth it—such fresh little lips. "You 'loved sweet thing, I don't worry you, do I?"

"You never worry me," said mother, "except when you and sister quarrel with each other."

"Good-by," said Brother, tactfully dropping the subject.

He went out, but presently reappeared to kiss his hand to her.

While this was going on the postman went by, as Rosy pointed out to her mother.

"Oh, dear," sighed mother, "the last mail, too."

"You might as well come and nurse me now," said Rosy, "you promised to."

"You big old thing!" cried mother, obeying.

Rosy cuddled up to her shoulder, lifted her little pointed sparkling face. "Isn't *he* silly?" she asked.

"Not a bit," answered mother firmly.

"Great big baby. Can't read yet."

"No one taught him. Grandma taught you."

"I love you." Rosy was showering kisses. "*He* says I delicious you; isn't he silly?"

"Oh, Rosy," exclaimed mother, "if it isn't exactly like having a white kitten and a brown puppy in the same basket by the fire!"

Miss Abby Farr stood behind the single counter of the tiny notion store, which was merely the front room of an old dwelling. Miss Janetta hovered over Brother, who had climbed up on the spool-chest and was rapturously gazing down on the most splendid draw he had ever seen—a ship fully seven inches long, in full sail, flying a scarlet flag with strange yellow devices.

"I want to draw *that*," said Brother, pointing.

"You had better buy some candy, Brother," counseled Miss Janetta. "The draws ain't very good now. You mightn't get the ship at all. It's this way," she explained. "All the toys have a number, then the same number is wrapped up with one of these little sticks of chewing wax. You might not get the ship, you see."

"I want to draw *that*," repeated Brother, his beaming, eager eyes each mirroring a beautiful and perfect little craft.

"Very well," said Miss Janetta in her thin gentle voice, "put your hand in the box and draw."

Bother took up the stick of wax remotest from his side of the box, and Miss Janetta held out her hand. "Let's see what you drew," she said.

Brother laid it in her palm. Already his fingers hovered over the gay little painted toy, and he saw himself gloriously sailing it in the bathtub. Then, recalled to the present, he looked up. Miss Janetta was handing him something.

"You got a pretty little fan, Brother," she told him in a congratulatory tone.

Slowly he comprehended. This was the incredible chance that he might not get the ship meeting him face to face. But it could not happen twice. His second penny fell into Miss Janetta's palm. "I want another draw," said Brother.

"You had better buy some candy, Brother," urged Miss Janetta. "Draws ain't very good now."

Brother took the draw nearest him this time. Again two tiny perfect ships beamed in his eyes. Again his fingers hovered.

"You got a nice whistle this time, Brother," said Miss Janetta blandly.

Brother climbed down from the spool-chest. Blankness took the place of brightness in his brown eyes. But there would be other pennies, and the whistle made a good deal of noise. He walked into Bowler's blowing it distractingly.

Allie smiled at him. "I've been looking for you, Brother," she said.

"I went to Abby Farr's. I went to draw a ship."

"And did you draw it?"

"I didn't this time." Brother said it hopefully.

"I expect you will next time," Allie cheered him. "What will you have now?"

"Wosy wants a penny's wurf of butter daisies."

"Allie wants a kiss." She gave him the butter daisies and he gave her the penny and the kiss, and trudged home whistling soberly. On the corner he met father, who swung his five-year-old shoulder high.

Brother, being so close to father's

ear, availed himself of the opportunity. "Farver," he whispered loudly, "you haven't got a penny, have you?"

"I might have *one*," conceded father, making a bluff of searching his pockets exhaustively. He finally produced three pennies. "One for sister," said father, "one for you, one for next time."

Brother fell upon the pennies, and to the pavement, with the same movement.

"I'm going to Abby Farr's," he announced.

In a short time he reappeared, downcast, as could be seen even at that distance; but when he saw father waiting he broke into a run, and so was beaming of eye and scarlet of cheek, and laughing of lip again, as they went upstreet together.

"And what did you draw, pal?" asked father.

"A little fan," said Brother, showing it without enthusiasm. "I'm going to give it to Wosy for her doll."

He thought a lot about the ship that night while he was getting off to sleep. Though he was all of five, mother had still to bear him company to Slumberland, while he put to her as many as he could remember of the questions which had been bubbling up in his brain all day as he sat in kindergarten or played. And all the time he artfully contrived to produce the impression of being every minute about to drop off to sleep.

That night he was insatiable for information concerning ships. Mother incautiously expanded on the subject of pirates. Brother's eyes blazed in the dark. He kissed her in a hurricane of rapture, quite forgetting that he was supposed to be nearly asleep.

"When I draw the ship, I can play I'm Blackbeard," he cried. "Muvver. *lissing*, muvver, get me a big feaver to stick in my hat."

"Will one of those peacock feathers in the closet do?"

"Oh, muvver!" He snuggled closer and said in a wheedling, wee voice: "Can't you change some money and get some pennies for me to-morrow?"

"Little beloved," cried mother, "if this sort of thing goes on we'll have to live on bread and maple-sirup. That Allie!" she added. She really thought it dear of Allie to do it, though. She had a soft spot for every one who had a soft spot for Brother. She smiled to herself and hugged him until he wriggled away.

"You are pulling my hair, you sweet sweetheart," he apologized.

Next week was warm, and Rosy, who had had a sore throat, was deemed well enough to accompany Brother to Abby Farr's that she might purchase a school-tablet.

"And here is Brother again," said Miss Abby. Her young blue eyes shone frostily under her firm, snowy pompadour. Her neck-ribbon beneath the narrow lace collar was blue, with pink roses scattered over it. She liked neck-ribbons, and collecting them was her hobby.

"And Rosy, too; how is Rosy to-day?" asked Miss Janetta. She was younger than her sister, but more old-fashioned. Her graying brown hair lay in even waves over her ears, and glasses obscured the kindliness of her eyes which were softer and lighter than Miss Abby's. Miss Janetta had a hobby, too. Hers was children. And of them all, perhaps, Brother was the best loved. Rosy she feared and respected, but Brother had crept deep into her heart. She had purposely avoided noticing him so far, but Miss Abby was waiting on Rosy, and he had climbed up on the spool-chest.

"I want a draw," he said, displaying two pennies.

"I'm afraid you won't get the ship, Brother," warned Miss Janetta.

"I want two draws," said Brother. He held out his pennies. His smile was less radiant than usual, and his air of hopefulness drooped. Miss Janetta saw with concern the quiver of disappointment that ran over his expressive little face as he turned away.

Rosy was still busy over tablets. All the tablets from the shelf seemed to be piled on the counter, and Miss Janetta discerned from Miss Abby's tone that her patience was breaking.

"You'd better have this, dear."

"Sister Presentia never lets us use that kind."

"Then this; a great many school-children buy this tablet."

"The Third Reader Room doesn't buy it," said Rosy.

"I think you had better go to a bookstore for your tablet," said Miss Abby, the frosty sparkle in her eye colder than ever.

"I think so, too," agreed Rosy cordially, her single dimple very deep in her pink cheek. She loved to go downtown, and was grateful to Miss Abby for giving her so good an excuse.

"Wait on me," she called to Brother, who was pursuing a solitary way, remote half a square ahead.

Miss Abby began piling the tablets back on their shelf. Her back was noticeably dignified. "I sometimes wonder if children's trade is worth the trouble," she said at length, turning around.

"Oh, sister," remonstrated Miss Janetta. "The dear little creatures!"

"Now that Cameron child who just went out," said Miss Abby.

"Little Rosalie?"

"Oh, is that her name? She invariably wastes my time."

Miss Janetta could not help smiling, for the comedy of Rosy had been played before her many times that summer.

"But the little boy, sister, little Brother."

"Brother is a nice little boy," conceded Miss Abby, "and I do think he has the finest brown eyes I ever saw. It's curious those children look and act so little alike."

"Sister," said Miss Janetta, not apparently hearing this, "I don't like the draws much. I don't believe it's good for the children to be disappointed about getting things."

"The draws are good for business, Jenny," replied Miss Abby in her crispest voice.

"Now, Brother," persisted Miss Janetta, "he nearly cried to-day because he didn't draw that ship there. He's been drawing for it all week. I don't know as we ought to have draws anyway"—Miss Janetta was daring further than she had ever dared before—"good churchgoers like us. They're too much like a lottery."

Miss Abby turned on her a battery of anger and astonishment, but just then Brother ran in with shining eyes.

"I traded Wosy my shooters for a penny," he cried. "I want anuvver draw." He brimmed over with delight as he mounted the spool-chest. The unexpected acquisition of the penny had restored his normal state of hopefulness.

Miss Janetta deliberately walked into the back sitting-room and left Miss Abby to wait on the customer.

Brother's silky brown head pressed for a moment against her white apron as he reached over for a draw, and she felt oddly impelled to stroke it. She was not indiscriminate like Miss Janetta, but she liked the pretty children—all but Rosy, whom she considered an unendurable little minx. In spite of her ruffled feelings she smiled at him as she untwisted the wax and read the number.

"You drew a nice whistle, Brother," said Miss Abby, watching him closely.

Every spark of light went out in the vivid little countenance. For the first time he had not the heart to blow the whistle, which was his ninth that week, and she saw him present it to a boy who was playing outside.

She took her place behind the counter in a defiant mood. "It's business," she declared to herself, and found the word a bulwark against sentiment. She thought contemptuously of Janetta's softness.

All that evening, a Friday evening, the shop was crowded with school-children; but Miss Janetta, having successfully invented some work to do in the living part of the house, tacitly refused to help during the rush, except when Miss Abby ate her supper. They did not speak to each other until Miss Abby retired. Then she looked into the dining-room, where Miss Janetta was unnecessarily ironing a shirt-waist.

"Good night, Jenny." She said it stiffly. Miss Janetta looked up timidly.

"Good night, sister," she returned in a faltering tone.

"I hope you can find time to help in

the shop to-morrow," said Miss Abby politely.

"I'll try to, sister," answered Miss Janetta even more falteringly as she shook out a twisted sleeve.

Miss Abby had slapped her often enough in their childhood. Her fingers tingled now, but being grown up has its disadvantages. She shut the door suddenly and walked up the steps very distinctly.

Saturday morning, however, Miss Janetta appeared as usual in the shop, after clearing up the breakfast things. After all, Abigail was her sister, and her first duty was to Abigail, who had fitted out the little shop with a small legacy of her own; but Miss Janetta very much hoped that Brother would stay away that day.

Naturally, he didn't. Once he had two pennies, once he had three, and then quite late, almost at closing time, he came slowly in with a single penny. He had meant to have a draw; but after gazing at the ship for a silent unhopeful space he climbed down.

"I believe I'll take some chocolate pennies," he said.

Miss Janetta could better have borne his hopefulness. "You'd better take a draw, Brother," she said, unaccountably to Miss Abby, more unaccountably to herself. "Draws are pretty good now."

Smiling doubtfully, yet relured by the faintest suggestion of hope, Brother climbed back, and handed her the wax of his selection. As Miss Janetta opened the wrapper her face wore an inscrutable expression. She read the number with extreme care.

"Why, you got the pretty little ship this time, Brother," said Miss Janetta. She handed it to him, consciously evading Miss Abby's surprised eyes.

Miss Abby took a forward step, then stopped, looking at little Brother who stood in the middle of the floor examining his treasure. Radiance shone from the whole little figure, the prim, dull room was bathed in it, Miss Abby, too.

"I fought I wasn't *never* going to draw the ship," he said at last in a joyous gurgle. He said it confidentially to Miss Janetta. "Wasn't I silly?"

"Well, I *think* so," agreed Miss Janetta, with a laugh of pure pleasure. It was worth any possible day of reckoning, she felt, that moment.

Little Brother ran home in the wildest spirits. He saw Allie across at Bowler's door. "I drew the ship," he cried to her, to every one along his street, to cross old man Thomas smoking on his bench, to kindly Brother Eugene pacing slowly with bent head, and all alike, moody hearts or gentle, went out to meet his joy.

He found the house deserted. Mother had run over to a neighbor's to exchange late magazines and indignant views on Bowler's sky-soaring prices. Father was on his way home from the office; Rosy on hers from school.

He made an unobstructed way to the bathroom, and turned on both faucets in one magnificent stream. While the tub was filling he arrayed himself in a sash made out of mother's crimson silk shawl. Then he cocked his blue Tam, plus the peacock feather, over one eye, and dashingly hewed himself a sword out of a bronze pasteboard-box top.

He stayed before mother's mirror so long, gesturing and frowning at the enemy, that the waves had nearly begun to slip over the edge of the tub when he got down-stairs. The splendid setting sun streamed in at the bathroom window, and sparkled on the water, and on the snowy sails as he launched the ship—how glad we are that she proved seaworthy!

Presently he would anchor her on a far distant shore and sweep, sword in hand, with his bloodthirsty crew through the streets of a great, rich city. The ship careened perilously as he splashed wildly and sang such scraps out of his memory as seemed appropriate.

"The bells of forwin cities
Wung out along the plain.
He stemmed the wapid Wone,
He sailed the angry main."

(Tremendous splashing.)

"And sweep froo the deep
While the stormy winds do blow.
While the battle wages long and loud
A—a fousand years ago!"

concluded the singer erroneously, but with deep, dreamy ecstasy.

"A fousand years ago!"

"Hush," gestured mother from the hall. Father peeped, and repeated the gestures to Rosy swinging her strap of books on the step. Rosy crowded her little cool pink face in between father's gray top-coat and mother's soft brown skirt. She surveyed the scene scornfully, yet with anticipatory sparkles and dimples.

"Isn't he silly?" said Rosy.

That evening a drummer came in seeking orders from Miss Abby.

"About the draws, now?" asked the drummer, glancing over the boxes in the shop-window. "You're nearly out, I see. I've some pretty attractive goods in that line—get the kids sure."

For the first time in hours Miss Abby condescended to meet Miss Janetta's timid, pleading, yet indomitable eyes. A fateful silence filled the little room; even the drummer forewent the soft whistle wherewith he usually filled the gaps of speech. At length Miss Abby turned to him.

"My sister doesn't like the draws very well," she told him. "She thinks they haven't a good moral influence on people, and"—she glanced at Miss Janetta severely, yet forgivingly—"I don't know but what I agree with her."

"Oh, I *say*," argued the drummer, "why you get *something* every time—*they're* all right."

"I guess we won't have any more draws," said Miss Abby, politely.

A FAREWELL

IF I could feel that you were glad—
I would bless Love and turn away
To live life out just as it fell,
Without one bitter word to say.
Or could I come when you are sad
Or cold or weary—but debarred
To comfort you in creature ill
Is of the hardest hard!

Day, night and toil were all as one
Were I but sure your sky was spanned
By rainbow or by crescent moon—
Then I could wait to understand.
Or did I know your heaven sure,
Though soft o'er you the gentle sod—
But thus to leave you sorrowing
Is more than life dare ask of God!

MARTHA GILBERT DICKINSON BIANCHI.

The GIRL WHO LAUGHED

By Owen Oliver



"E can have coffee in the drawing-room if you like," Aunt Mary proposed, when dinner was finished. "There is no one to knock it over to-night."

"She only did it once," Aunt Julia protested mildly.

"Twice," Uncle William corrected. "Once when she was playing with the cat; and once when she fell over John's foot, if you remember."

"I remember her falling over my foot," Uncle John said, with feeling. He suffered from gout. "I had forgotten about the coffee."

"The stain is under the skin-rug," Aunt Mary explained. "She shifted the furniture to hide it. She is sensible in some ways; but her spirits are so high! She seems to laugh at everything from morning till evening."

"She is only sixteen," Aunt Julia apologized. "She can't help being young."

"And we can't help being old," said Uncle William. "I don't blame the child for laughing at nothing; but, as Mary says, it's trying. Yes, Mary, I think we might have the coffee in the drawing-room. It will be like the times before the invasion!" That was their name for the historical day when Phyllis, round-faced and friendly and fourteen, had come among them. "Shall I help you, John?"

"Thank you, William. As Phyllis isn't here I should be glad of your arm, if you wouldn't mind. The child means well. She never forgets to assist me, if you notice. We were a little too old to have a young girl to look after. That is the fact of the matter, I think, William. Still, she was Norah's child; and we have done our best. It is worst for Mary and Julia, of course."

"Nobody can say that we have not done our duty by her," Aunt Mary asserted. "Perhaps we ought to have been more strict; but her fault is only youthfulness, I think. We have tried to be kind to her."

"I think *she* has tried," Aunt Julia pleaded. "She is very restless, of course; but, as Mary says, she is young."

"My dear Julia," Uncle William said, "nobody is blaming her. It is the old story. 'Youth and crabbed age cannot live together.' Not that we are crabbed. We have always made allowances for her. She hasn't been repressed in any way. Indeed, I am not sure that she stands in sufficient awe of us. I think I have heard her call you 'Judy.'"

"Her mother always did," said Aunt Julia. "And she calls you 'Uncle Bill.'"

"Ye-es," he owned. "Ye-es. I shall have to speak to her about it; but she'd only laugh. Her spirits are high, as Mary says; very high. The child means well; but it is trying. Ah, Martha! *You* will know where my pipe is."

"Not nowadays, sir," Martha said severely, as she put down the coffee. "Miss Phyllis hides it away so that no one else sha'n't get it for you."

"Ah!" he said. "Umph! I must have a cigar, I suppose. Try one, John. They're some of those I got for the company's dinner. Hides it, does she?"

"There was a time," Martha remarked, "when I could lay my hands on everything in the house; but that's altered these two years." She passed on to Uncle John. "Shall I put the chairs

to guard your foot, sir?" He had made a rampart round himself since Phyllis tumbled over him.

"It will not be necessary to-night, Martha," he decided.

"No, sir." Martha nodded grimly. Miss Phyllis was "a visitation," she frequently remarked to the cook and the housemaid, and they'd no business to encourage her in the kitchen. Encouraged or otherwise, Miss Phyllis paid them a visit every evening, and acted and danced skirt-dances while the cook and the housemaid held their sides. She generally ended by attempting to make Martha dance; and she always addressed her as "my faithful Martha"! Martha had declared frequently that she would not put up with it any longer, and would speak to Miss Mary the next morning; but she never had.

"William has put the case very correctly," Aunt Mary stated, when Martha had gone. "We wish to do our duty by Norah's child, and we do not think badly of her. In fact, we regard her with affection; but we are none of us very strong, and we are scarcely fit to bear the infliction of a wild young creature in our peaceful household. She is out of place here."

"She is like her mother," Aunt Julia mentioned. "Norah was always lively."

"Lively isn't the word for Phyllis," Uncle William asserted.

"She is exuberant," Uncle John pronounced. "Exuberant."

"In short," Aunt Mary summed up, "she is a great responsibility, and one that we are scarcely equal to undertaking. I don't see why her father's relatives should not take a turn with her."

"I shouldn't mind if it weren't for my nerves," Aunt Julia stated. "She doesn't understand, poor child!"

"If you explained to her," Uncle William suggested, "she might be a little less—er—exuberant."

"Oh!" said Aunt Julia. "I couldn't be unkind to her. She—Norah was just the same when she was her age."

"Mary would be the best one to speak to her," Uncle John pronounced. "She is really growing old enough to—not to laugh at everything. She should think a little."

"You can't make young people think," Aunt Mary stated. "She is what she is; and she's poor Norah's child. No, John; I can't see my way to curbing her spirits; but she is a great trial to us. Even Julia will admit that."

"Yes," Aunt Julia sighed. "She is a trial."

Uncle William blew a smoke-ring thoughtfully.

"Suppose you ran over and saw the Carsons, Mary? You could hint that, as her paternal relatives, they had a right to have her in their turn. You'd know how to put it. I never get through the *Times* in the evening when she's racketing about. Why, last night, I missed a whole page; the one with the insurance case in it!"

"I have only solved eleven problems out of thirteen this last quarter," Uncle John observed. "She will try to help me, and——" He shook his head. "She means well, of course; but she has no idea of chess; none at all."

"She has broken a good many things lately," Aunt Mary added. "When she was learning to throw up that—what does she call it, Julia?"

"Diabolo," said Aunt Julia. "The child must do something; and we're dull company for her. She catches it very nicely now."

"I'm not blaming her," Aunt Mary said, "but ourselves for having her."

"No, no," Uncle William interposed. "I don't consider that we're to blame. Some one had to look after her; and if we took her we were bound to make her comfortable. I wouldn't be a party to sending her away to school or anywhere where she would be repressed; but the Carsons would be good to her. They're very—well, exuberant—themselves. She'd be in her element there."

"Just so," Uncle John agreed. "Just so. *Would* you mind getting me the chessmen, William, as Phyllis isn't here? I'm sorry to trouble you."

"No trouble, John, no trouble. There seems to be a black pawn missing?"

"Phyllis!" Uncle John groaned. "She

pocketed it by mistake the other night, and she cannot find it. She gets me a draught instead. Thank you, William."

"She's always losing things," Aunt Mary sighed. "There's my thimble; the one that was Cousin Ellen's. I'd had it for thirty years. I don't know what we've done that we should have to put up with these things at our time of life."

"I can understand her losing a thimble," Aunt Julia said; "but how she managed to break my little scissors I *don't* know. I had them before she was born. I really think the Carsons ought to have her for a time. She's their niece as much as ours."

"She does not realize the importance of things," Uncle William complained. "Yesterday she destroyed my Financial Supplement. It appears that cook's niece brought her little boy here; and Phyllis wanted some paper to make a cocked-hat for him! There was 'nothing on it but a lot of silly figures,' she said! Really, I don't see why the Carsons should not have their turn."

"A letter for you, Miss Mary," Martha announced. "And is any one to go for Miss Phyllis, please?"

"No, thank you, Martha. Mrs. Norris is going to leave her here. The letter is from the Carsons."

"Umph!" said Uncle William.

"Talk of the Carsons!" said Uncle John.

"What is the matter, Mary?" Aunt Julia asked.

Aunt Mary laid the letter down and drew a deep breath.

"They want Phyllis," she said. "For good!"

There was a solemn silence.

"It isn't fair," Aunt Julia said at last. "She's Norah's child, and as much ours as theirs."

"More," said Uncle William emphatically. "It is the mother that counts. I should refuse absolutely."

"Legally," said Uncle John, "the father's people have the first claim; but since they've left her to us ever since poor Norah—I should resist it. Certainly I should resist it."

"They do not make it a matter of contention," Aunt Mary stated. "They propose that Phyllis should choose. They think that she must be rather a tax upon us——"

"What do they know about it?" Uncle William demanded angrily.

"Why don't they wait till we complain?" Uncle John wanted to know.

"Nobody can say we've ever grudged her anything," Aunt Julia protested. She was wiping her eyes. "She's had the best of clothes and the best of teaching and her own way in everything."

"They acknowledge that," said Aunt Mary. "It is a pleasant letter. Margaret is a pleasant woman; though she can't feel to the child like her own mother's people, of course; but she is a good woman."

"Yes," the rest acknowledged grudgingly.

"She knows that we shall advise the child for her good, she says; but we should remember that young people want young companions."

"Twice a week she has some one to tea," Aunt Julia cried excitedly. "Never less!"

"And that she has several somewhere about Phyllis' age, so that it would be more cheerful for her. I—I dare say it would."

"It would be better for her," Aunt Julia owned miserably. "Norah was always lively; and Phyllis is like—like Norah, when—she was the baby and we—we were always good to her."

"Ye-es." Uncle William fumbled for the matches. He had let his cigar out. "I remember how we taught her to walk. Lumps of sugar round the chairs! I—we're old. I dare say it's been dull for her. We've tried to make allowances, but I suppose we're a bit fidgety. What we've said to-night proves it. Well, we've only grumbled among ourselves, not to *her*. We—— What do you say, John?"

"I—I can't solve the confounded thing." Uncle John swept the chessmen into the box with a rattle. "We've got to do what's best for the child, of course. I should give her the letter without comment and let her choose."

"If she thinks that we don't want her to go," Aunt Julia said, "she won't. She is very feeling—when she thinks."

"She won't think," Uncle William said. "Why should she? We're just fussy old people, who—I'm hanged if we've been fussy with the child!"

"I don't know," Aunt Mary sighed. "We haven't meant to be, but—— What is it, Martha? It's no use whispering. I can't hear. May you light a fire in Miss Phyllis' room? Now, have I ever objected to your doing anything for Miss Phyllis? Have any of us? Yes, yes. It was quite right to ask, Martha. Of course you may. We—we sha'n't have her long. Her Uncle and Aunt Carson wish her to live with them, and —and it will relieve you of a great deal of trouble. *What did you say, Martha?* You forget yourself! Don't mumble at *me!* Miss Phyllis will please herself. You will kindly avoid mentioning the matter to her when she comes in."

"Servants are curious creatures," Uncle William declared, when Martha had swept out. "Martha has threatened to give notice once a week ever since the child came, and now—— Well, well! You get used to people. That's Phyllis' knock. Nobody could say she wasn't at home here if they heard her bang like that! *You* tell her, Mary."

The door flew open and a big, bonny girl with a plump, laughing face and dancing brown eyes rushed in.

"Oh, Uncle Bill!" she cried. "I took your old pipe in my pocket. Take that nasty cigar out of your mouth, and we'll kiss and make friends. There! Oh! I've had a lovely time! The concert was splendid; and we went shopping all the afternoon, and I've mended all my misdeeds—at least all yesterday's!" She laughed merrily. "Here's a lovely pawn, Uncle John. I *did* have to argue with the man to get an odd one. Let's see if it matches? Why aren't you playing? I'll be careful of your poor foot, really I will. Is it bad to-night? Where's the rampart? It's just a tiny bit bigger, but I'll scrape it; and it's better than a draught, isn't it."

"It's the best piece of the set, my dear," Uncle John said. "Far the best. Thank you, Phil."

"Here's a thimble for you, Aunt Mary. It's silver. See! The mark's here. Let me try it on you. It's the right size, isn't it?"

"My dear," Aunt Mary said, "it is *exact!*"

Aunt Mary held up her finger and blinked at the thimble.

"It is *exact!*" she repeated.

"Now, Judy, dear!" Phyllis skipped round to her youngest aunt, whom she always addressed in this irreverent manner, and flourished a pair of scissors near her nose. "Aren't they a *ducky* little pair, Judy? The man said they were the best steel. I was very particular about it. I made Mrs. Norris laugh. If we had something to cut——"

"You can have the *Times*, Phyllis," Uncle William offered recklessly. His voice was a trifle husky.

"Oh, Bill, dear!" The girl laughed. "I mean Uncle William!" She laughed again. "As if I'd touch your sacred old paper—except the Financial Supplement!" She laughed once more. "Here's a circular—Jones' Sale! Look! Don't they cut beautifully?"

"Beautifully, dear," Aunt Julia gasped. "I—I think there's an eyelash in my eye."

"Let me see." Phyllis flopped down on her knees and examined Aunt Julia's eyes. "There's nothing in them, Judy," she pronounced. "It's a cold. You stay in bed to-morrow morning, and I'll bring up your breakfast."

She laughed and sprang up.

"Now, Uncle Bill—that is, William—Sweet William! Guess! You never will! Here's the Financial Supplement! I've begged it off Mr. Norris, because he doesn't save them. I didn't know you did, when I took it. Really I didn't."

"Bless you, child!" Uncle William said. "I—I think I've a cold, too."

"I believe you've all caught colds. I'll have to bring up all your breakfasts! What fun!" She clapped her hands. "*Do* stay in bed, too, Aunt Mary. I

shall be mistress then. It will be such a lark to give orders to the faithful Martha. *Won't* she be wild with me!" She laughed—as she always did at everything.

"There's a fire in your room, Miss Phyllis," Martha announced, "and I've put some supper on your little table!"

"Martha!" the girl cried. "You're a faithful love! I shall reward you tomorrow. I am going to be mistress, because they've got bad colds."

"Umph!" said Martha. It seemed that she had a cold, too.

"I do like teasing Martha," the girl declared, smiling and pushing back her hair. "She doesn't really mind, only pretends to. Good night, dears."

She made for Aunt Mary, to commence her round of farewells; but Aunt Mary held up her hand.

"Wait a moment, Phyllis," she said. "I—*you* tell her, William."

Uncle William put on his spectacles, and took up the letter, and coughed.

"Your Aunt Carson has written to us," he announced. "She thinks that it would be more cheerful for you there. You would be with young people of your own age, and—Your mother was bright and lively like you are, and—We wish you to be happy of course, and—You must decide for yourself, my dear, and write and tell her."

"Oh!" Phyllis laughed. "It's jolly there! How long does she ask me for?"

"For always, my child," Aunt Mary said. Her cold seemed very severe. It had attacked the throat as well as the eyes.

"For—always," Phyllis repeated slowly. "Oh-h-h! I'll write now."

She walked over to Aunt Mary's little writing-table.

"You had better read the letter first," Uncle William suggested. "It is a very nice letter, and we wish to make no comment, except—Your aunt is mistaken in thinking that you have been a trouble to us, or that we wish to get rid of you. We should not like you to think that."

"She had no business to suggest it," Aunt Mary said.

"None whatever," Aunt Julia cried vehemently.

"Gross impertinence," Uncle John growled.

Phyllis read the letter rapidly.

"She doesn't say that exactly," she protested. "She—she really is nice, you know."

"Yes, my dear," Uncle William said. "She is a good woman; and she will be good to you. God bless you, my dear."

Phyllis nodded thoughtfully. Then she took up the pen and wrote quickly in her big, sprawling hand.

Uncle William lit his pipe. His hand shook. Uncle John examined the odd pawn; dropped it; picked it up; dropped it again. Aunt Julia buried her face in her hands. Aunt Mary went across the room and sat beside her. Her arm went slowly round her sister's shoulder. She was not a demonstrative woman, and she had not done that since Phyllis' mother died.

"I did not think she would be *quite* so ready to leave us," she said, under her breath.

There was a long silence except for the sprawling of the pen. At last Phyllis jumped up and knocked over the chair.

"There!" she cried. "It's done!"

She handed the letter to Uncle William. He glanced at it; wiped his glasses hurriedly; coughed, and read:

"DARLING AUNT MAGGIE: How very kind you are! It is always lovely at your house, and so jolly to be with you and uncle and Bob and Molly and Nan and Dick and Milly and little Jack and the dear baby. Please kiss him ever so many times for me. It makes it nice to have a lot to romp with, and I enjoy myself with you so much, and I am very, very grateful.

"Only, you see, auntie dear, it's lovely here, too; and you've got such a lot, and they've only got me. I don't wonder that you think I am a dreadful worry to them, but *they* don't think so."

Uncle William paused to wipe his spectacles.

"I often wonder that you don't!" the girl said, with her usual laugh.

"My dear girl!" Aunt Mary protested.

"My *dear* girl!" cried Aunt Julia.

"I was thinking of taking you to the theater to-morrow evening," Uncle William observed.

"We'll all go to the opera next week," Uncle John promised. "I'll get a box."

"Oh!" cried Phyllis. "You—you faithful uncles! Go on, Uncle Bill!"

"They have put up with me all the time I was young and a nuisance and broke things. Now I am quite old and sensible, so I am going to do things for them. I should like living with you, but I like living with them, too, and I simply *couldn't* leave them. You see, you have all your own boys and girls, and you couldn't love me like they do; and please, auntie dear, I have to love them best because they love me best. So don't be hurt and write soon. Good-by, auntie dear, and thank you very much.

"My best love to you and uncle and all of them, and lots of kisses. Your loving niece,

PHYLLIS.

"P. S.—Thank you, auntie dear, and uncle, too."

Uncle William put the letter in its envelope and closed it.

"Excellent," he said, "excellent! Very nicely expressed. I'll send Ann with it at once."

"You'll have to give me a stamp, Uncle Bill," Phyllis represented, "because I've spent all my allowance."

"Certainly," he agreed, "certainly. She's getting a big girl, John—'old and sensible,' eh? I think we shall have to raise that allowance?"

"Just what I was going to propose," said Uncle John.

"If we are a little fidgety sometimes, my dear," Aunt Mary said—and her voice shook—"we are—not so young. You are a great comfort to us."

"A *great* comfort," Aunt Julia added.

"You are all *dears!*" Phyllis asserted. She hugged them in turns, laughing all the time. "Fancy any one thinking you'd like to get rid of me!"

"Your supper's getting cold, Miss Phyllis," Martha announced severely; and Phyllis made a rush and swept her through the door.

"My faithful Martha," she began. Then she noticed Martha's eyes. "Why! What's the matter, Marty, dear?"

"Some people have their feelings," Martha said, with dignity. "I dare say *you* can laugh over it; but it isn't a laughing matter to them. They've put up with you and never grumbled; and come to that, so have I—and——"

"Now, Martha," Phyllis said, "it's no use you pretending that you want me to go, because you don't! Now—faithful Martha!" She took the old woman's arm coaxingly; and Martha burst into tears.

"You mean—you're going to stay? Miss Phyllis! My dear! Your mother was always my favorite, and——"

Phyllis bent her young head down to the old one.

"There!" she said. "Of course I'm going to stay, Marty, dear."

Then she ran up-stairs. She brushed her eyes as she ran, but before she reached the top she laughed again.

The housemaid and the cook were in her room, warming up the cocoa again.

"You're not going, Miss Phyllis?" they both entreated at once; and Phyllis sat on the bed with her arm over the rail and shook her head and laughed at them.

"I am faithful to my faithful ones!" she announced tragically.

"There!" cried cook. "I *told* Martha there was no need to take on! I knew you better. I'm that *glad* you're staying, miss! I couldn't abear the place without you. You'll find the sandwiches just how you like them, miss; and there's something under the cover in the hearth—but you mustn't look till the very last, mind. Good night, Miss Phyllis."

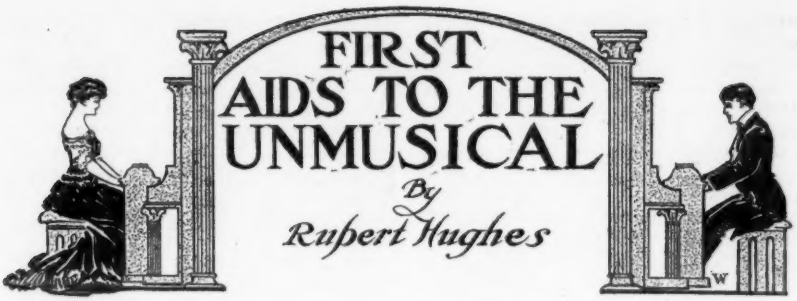
"Good night, miss." The housemaid was all smiles. "If there's nothing more I can do?"

Phyllis dipped into her pocket. The housemaid was not many years older than herself, and she always gave her some of her sweets.

"Chocolates, Annie," she said and pushed them into her hand. "Good night. Good night, cookie, dear."

She laughed and waved her hand till the door closed. Then she brushed her eyes quickly and knelt down by her bed.

"Dear Lord," she prayed, "bless them all, and make me a better girl to them!"



IT was an Irishman of ancient legend who complained: "Faith, these boots are so tight I'll never get them on till I'm after wearing them a time or two." The average American is much in the same dilemma musically. He can never enjoy good music until he has heard a lot of it. But how is he to sit through a lot of it till he is after loving it? There is an answer—a new answer. It is by way of machinery.

At first blush you would say that a more than Kentuckian feud exists between them—machinery and music. You would say that the immemorial quarrel of oil versus water would be more easily compromised.

Consequently there are numbers of very estimable people who love music and hate machinery, and who resent the intrusion of the latter in the former. To-day they "view with alarm" the remarkable popularity of machine-made music and wring their hands over the outlook.

But then the ancient order of hand-wringers we have always with us. They live only in the past, and are suspicious of everything that is not moldy with age. They are like connoisseurs of cheese, who cannot enjoy anything until the skippers are making merry in an odor of decay.

The art of music is especially the field of the impractical and unsound theorist; for the art of music has a less material basis than any other. The painter presents scenes and forms that everybody can recognize. The sculptor deals in hard cold facts. The actor and the dramatist hold the mirror up to nature; it may be a distorted reflection, but the characters must wear some sort of clothes, shoes, and hats, and must speak actual words. The architect builds solid buildings out of real substances. Even the poet, crazy as his flights may be, must transcribe them in words that can be found in any good dictionary.

But the musician represents nothing definite, concrete, substantial. He builds up an invisible structure with intangible materials—bricks without straw, and even without clay.

Architecture has been called frozen music. So we might say that music is architecture in a gaseous state.

The sounds the musician employs have a certain kinship with the human voice, or with the voices of nature, but the kinship is remote and all manner of instruments are invented to render it more remote. No man—not even the composer—can tell you very definitely what any melody means, or just what any chord is trying to say. Furthermore, the forms and ground-plans upon which music is built are of the flimsiest sort and vary with the whim of the composer. The sentiments he expresses are as vague as ecstasy and as inarticulate as the sobs and screams of an hysterical woman.

When a recent baby lies pink and plump on its mother's knees, and im-

provises the first raw material of speech, it is easy enough even for an old bachelor to tell whether it is happy or unhappy, but its own mother cannot translate into English the literal message. Its own mother cannot say, when it wails and shrieks, whether its grief is due to misplaced confidence in a so-called safety-pin, or to some indefinite state of regret for that heaven of the unborn from which it has been dragged into a wretched world.

At an orchestral concert the mystery is much the same. You can see an enormous Carnegie Hall full of people sitting spellbound and grief-stricken while the eminent Russian conductor Safonoff conducts the Philharmonic Orchestra through the overpowering sorrows of Tschaïkowski's "Pathetic Symphony." But not one of those hundreds can tell you just what made Tschaïkowski so unhappy. He spent months of labor writing out his score, choosing and coloring his harmonies, and all of these skilled musicians have been gathered and rehearsed for this performance. Hundreds of people have left their homes and paid their money to hear this undoubted masterpiece, and have been rendered divinely sad and blissfully miserable by it. And yet nobody knows what it is all about. Funny, isn't it?

Music's power is as mysterious as the force of gravity, and as universal. No scientist lives that can think of gravity without getting such a headache as one gets who beats his head against a stone wall. And so of music, the more you study it, the more elaborately you love it, the more elusive becomes its secret.

For this reason, music is peculiarly the playground of the feather-brained theorist and the humorless esthete. People who resent everything that is practical and common-sensible, crawl into music and pull the hole in after them. Then they growl at us who move about in an every-day workaday world.

They especially resent the delight that myriads of people are finding to-day in the music made by the various forms of piano-player and phonograph. They hurl at it the epithet "machine-made," and think they have demolished it.

But if they would only pause to think or to learn, they would realize that music has always leaned heavily on mechanism. Music indeed cannot otherwise exist. The human voice is the product of one of the most exquisite little machines imaginable. Every musical instrument is an invention based on mechanical principles. A piano is a little suspension bridge inside a little house. Some people object to the piano-player because so much intervenes between the performer and the production of tone. But in the harmless necessary piano, also, there is an elaborate system of leverages and of "overstringing" and "double escapement" by means of so-called pilots, carriers, hoppers and hammers, all of which have been devised by mechanicians after a century of rivalry.

The pipe-organ is perhaps the noblest, certainly the most complex of musical instruments. It is dedicated particularly to divine worship and hardly exists outside the church. Yet it is more like a small factory than an instrument. Just consider what happens when the pipe-organ is played; just consider how much occurs after the finger of the performer has touched the key, before that wonderful solemn sound fumes out of the lofty pipe.

If I may be pardoned, I will quote from my "Musical Guide":

> When looking at an organ, in a church, for example, the eye is first caught by the great array of pipes. These ornamental or display pipes—some of which may be only for show, dummy-pipes—conceal many plain pipes of wood or metal, which are of various shapes and sizes, according to the quality and pitch of the tone of the pipe. These pipes are grouped together into registers or "stops," each being of uniform quality of tone and furnishing a complete or partially complete scale—or series of pipes of graduated lengths. Though these pipes are merely colossal flutes, oboes, trumpets, etc.—each pipe, however, sounding only one tone—they are too large to be blown by human lungs, and an elaborate mechanism is used. This is concealed from the eye, which sees only the series of key-boards for the hands and feet, and the multitude of little draw-knobs grouped within easy reach. Of these key-

boards the numbers vary; those for the hands, the manuals, being from one to five in number.

By means of couplers, any two of these key-boards, manuals or pedals, may be connected; or they may all be combined into the full-organ. The coupling action is worked by draw-knobs.

The organ as a whole is divided into three chief parts: (1) The action key-boards and stops. (2) The pipe work. (3) The wind-supply. The pipes are set upright above the wind-chest, the cover of which is called the sound-board; the lower part of the pipe, passing through an upper-board, which grips its nose, sets its foot in the pipe-rack; below this is a slider worked by a draw-knob—a thin strip of wood with a hole for each pipe of its particular stop. The wind is collected from the outer air by bellows and led by feeders into a storage bellows, where it is compressed by heavy weights; it is next led by a wooden channel or wind-trunk into a wooden reservoir, or wind-chest, the top of which, the sound-board, is pierced by grooves closed by valves or pallets, and separated by bars. To play the organ we first pull out a draw-knob, which drags along a slider until its holes are beneath the feet of the pipes of its stop. Having also pulled out a draw-knob setting the wind-supply to work, or having signaled the person working the bellows, we next press down one of the digitals on the key-board whose stop we have drawn. In pressing down the digital lever we raise its opposite end, which lifts an upright rod, this in turn raising the front end of a horizontal lever whose rear end is thus depressed and pulls down a thin upright strip of wood, which in turn pulls a wire fastened to a valve which opens and lets the air waiting in the groove from the wind-chest rush up through the slider into the pipe. This is the mechanism by which each tone is secured. By means of a multitude of stops and couplers, what would be a simple tone or chord on another instrument may become a vast group of tones of various pitches and colors.

This is complicated enough, heaven knows, but when we realize that the pipe-organ may be divided into distant sections, some of them at the other end of the church, and when we realize that hydraulic pressure, steam and electricity are also often utilized, one feels inclined to say that the man who plays a pipe-organ is not so much a musician as an engineer.

How foolish, then, it seems to complain of the mechanical element in music.

The one thing necessary is the result. If the resulting music is mechanical, unhuman, automatic, lacking in personality and appeal, it is bad music, whether it is made by a machine or pumped out by a conservatory pupil lacking in temperament and full of rules.

The aversion to mechanical improvements in music is only the old and unreasoning resistance certain classes of people have always made to everything new.

Your true conservative will martyrize himself most exquisitely for his religion. In cave-dwelling days he must have decried the invasion and popularity of the newfangled thing called a bow and arrow. The first man who put a sail on a boat was undoubtedly reviled in the same terms. When the steamboat came in, the conservative had now moved on to approve the sailboat, but he could not stomach steam. The captains of the early packets describe the ridicule and hatred they had to endure. Yet Kipling reached his highest level in his poem praying for a "song of steam."

The conservative used to berate the railroad because it was fast and smooth and dry. He clung to the slow, bone-racking, rain-mildewed stage-coach. He found it poetical! Wordsworth wrote a sonnet against the K. and W. Railway. Even that did not stop it! Later poets began to realize the Titanic beauty of a locomotive plunging through the wilderness, changing the dragon from fable to fact. Even the rural trolley-car is being recognized as an engine of beauty.

This is the day of safety razors. Yet there is an army of conservatives clinging to the methods of prehistoric Egypt. I remember having long arguments with a certain well-known writer who used to hack and hew his visage with the old barbarous blade. He had to have one for every day of the week. He had to strop it and chop it, and hone it and baby it like an invalid, and it rewarded his devotion by committing mayhem on him, with the most whimsical moods and malicious surprises. If the wind was from the northwest he could not tell it from a hand-saw. Yet if you advised him to try a razor of

this century, he would indulge in a rhapsody upon the strange advantages of the primeval scraper.

After a few years he was induced to test a safety razor—"since which," as the advertisers say, "he has used no other." He is now a rhapsodist for the safety razor. Should a scheme be evolved by some mental Christian Scientist for shaving by mere act of declaring whiskers an "error," he would undoubtedly decline that.

There is something almost sublime in the fanaticism with which a conservative will inconvenience himself for his creed.

Of this same school is the enemy of the piano-player and the singing machine. He speaks of them as harmful to music, though they are in fact the greatest aids ever invented for spreading broadcast the gospel of good music and the true appreciation of it.

The best music can only be enjoyed by being known. Cheap tunes pop into the head with the speed of grippe microbes, and soon make themselves as unpopular. They breed a whistling sickness, and the buzzing in the ears soon becomes intolerable. In the case of a popular street song, we reverse the old rule and first embrace, then pity, then endure.

But familiarity with good music does not breed contempt. Familiarity explains it, each new hearing disclosing a new beauty, a new subtlety, a new sincerity. It stands examination even by microscope, as a flower which delights the eye and the nostrils reveals ever some new wonder as it is analyzed and analyzed.

The trouble with classical music is its very complexity. Only the most brilliant performers can play it. Each work requires months of practise; each performer is limited therefore to a small repertory, and his route is necessarily limited.

Paderewski draws huge audiences, but he plays only a few pieces in each town and touches only a few towns.

If every one of our eighty million Americans were to resolve to attend one good concert once a year the musicians would die of overwork before the first month.

It is impossible for all the Mahomets to go to music. Music must be brought to Mahomet. But how? It is possible only in the form of what has been contemptuously called "canned music."

A fine fresh fruit is better than any tinned comestible, but fine fresh fruits are perishable; they do not grow all the time. Without canned foods this nation would be in a sad state.

A piano performance by Paderewski is indeed better than a machine-made grind by John Doe, but Paderewski is not an army. He is not even twins. Furthermore, the average piano-player plays so very badly that machine-made music could not possibly be worse. By the same token, no phonographic record could possibly be worse than the squawking, growling, banshee noises of the ordinary untrained domestic vocalist. Few of our sons and daughters are musically speaking—house-broken.

By the aid of numerous ingenious and reasonably priced inventions it is possible to provide a very high quality of music for every home. In numberless houses previously without harmony music now flows like water. It can be turned on or off as with a faucet. It may be of inferior quality, like a cheap municipal gas, but it gives at least some light in what were otherwise the darkness of sub-cellar at midnight.

In an earlier day there were automatic instruments ranging from a tinkly little music-box to huge monstrosities which ran with the rigid regularity of clockwork and had all the monotonous heartlessness of a donkey-engine. The human element could not interfere except to stop the torture. To-day, however, it is possible to push an attachment up to an ordinary piano, insert a roll of perforated paper, put one's feet upon the pedals and let the machine do the rest—with this added privilege, that the player may at any moment quicken or retard the pace, soften or louden the tone, and manage all to his own royal pleasure. Or you may buy a piano with the mechanism concealed in the case.

You may be a man whose business has kept him from all knowledge of music except a hunger for it; or you may be a mother whose procession of children has delighted the President, but prevented you from keeping up the practise your father had paid for; or you may be a young man or woman unable to afford time, money, or energy for plodding through the eternal doldrums of five-finger exercises. Were it not for mechanisms of recent invention you would be eternally debarred from making music of your own selection at your own convenience to suit your own soul.

Now, however, there has been issued a new Emancipation Proclamation in the world of culture. To the Constitution of these United Arts, there has been added a Sixteenth Amendment, declaring that every man who can afford it is free to work out his own musical destiny without regard to previous condition of conservitude.

Of course, no mechanism can ever make a genius of a commonplace soul, as no legal franchise can make a proud spirit out of a groveler. But neither can a lifelong training under a teacher of voice or instrument make a flaming artist out of a fire-proof soul.

I have sat and listened with keenest emotional delight to the performance of a piece of classic music by a business man skilfully manipulating a piano-player, and I have sat and writhed under the merciless clatter of some virtuoso who had belabored a piano for a lifetime.

Your merely technical singer, pianist, violinist, flutist, or what not, is only a gymnast boasting of his speed or his noise. At best he cannot play or sing as fast or as loud as a piano-playing instrument with the throttle pulled out to full speed. As for soulfulness—how many professional musicians are genuinely inspired or inspiring?

I know a number of men who could not play a scale or write a chord, who can so deftly manage the levers of a piano-playing instrument that their performances are really artistic. They have grasped the spirit of the composer, and added to it a personality of their own that deserves the noble word "interpretation." Many of them have acquired an amazing knowledge of the best musical literature.

In the mountains last summer I sat with a group of musicians and others around the giant morning-glory horn of a machine pouring forth a song of Caruso's. Every one in the group was moved to tears by the wild beauty of those tones. I have heard Caruso himself sing worse than his record sang for him that night.

Every year sees some new improvement, some closer approach to the ideal condition. It is possible even to transpose the music to any other key instantly to suit the voice of the singer or the wish of the instrumentalist.

It is possible now by a neat device, known as the "Metrostyle," to follow the very footsteps of some great pianist, and to repeat every one of his accelerations, retardations, crescendos, or diminuendos. This is accomplished very simply and in such manner that it does not interfere with your own freedom. You may alter the reading to suit your own artistic desire.

A recent importation from Germany is an instrument that reproduces almost exactly the actual performance of the greatest pianists, as the phonographic machines reproduce the voice of a singer. In an office-building the other day I heard this instrument repeat a Nocturne and a Polonaise by Chopin as Paderewski played them, and Wagner's "Magic Fire Music" as Josef Hoffman played it. The machine showed an astonishing beauty and fidelity to the individuality. When I closed my eyes I would have sworn that the artists themselves were in the room making that music. And even with eyes open, I almost felt that by some hocus-pocus the player was hidden in the instrument as the dwarf used to be concealed in the figure of the famous "Automatic Chess Player."

It used to be a pitiful thing to realize that the divine arts of the singer, the instrumentalist, the actor and the dancer could not be perpetuated to fu-

ture ages. Many of the stupidest writings of the most ancient poetasters are not lost. Dismal old grammars and histories as inaccurate as they were dull, are packed in the libraries and monasteries and wrapped round mummies. Acres of the bad painting of old Italy, Germany and Spain hang on the groaning walls. Tons of ugly and inept sculpture are preserved.

But no man shall ever hear again the tones with which the great Farinelli drove the people of Europe mad with rapture or, like another David appeasing another Saul, soothed the mad frenzies of the fifth King Philip of Spain. None can ever hear again the fluting of the "Swedish Nightingale" or even the young-throated graces of Adelina Patti. The world has lost forever the fiddle-miracle of Paganini and the piano-magic of Abbé Liszt.

There was no possibility of recording the steps with which Salome danced the Baptist's head off, or even the lithe poetry of Fanny Elssler. So Roscius the actor whom Cicero admired, and Shakespeare's friend Burbage, and Garrick, and Booth have taken their gestures, their eyes, and their voices into the absolute zero of oblivion.

These horrors are no longer necessary. The picture-machines can record the lightest shade of expression, the swiftest shift of motion. The sound-machines can seize and repeat the voices of speech or song in as many copies as a printing-press can turn out. And now even the art of the pianist can be immortalized. It takes no long look into the future to see the time when the art of the violinist and 'cellist, the horn-player and the others, and even the orchestral readings of great conductors, shall be similarly recorded to defy the barbarism of time.

There is immediate need of a change of point in our great libraries. Let them realize that the preservation only of printed matters is but a small part of their duty and their opportunity. Let Mr. Carnegie, who has given the country music-halls as well as libraries, devote part of his munificence to the collections of records of the masterpieces of arts formerly called perishable. Let there be rooms set apart where the music-lover can find records and instruments for reference.

And then in future ages it will be no harder to recall how our great singers, actors and dancers, sang, played and moved, than to keep alive the rhapsodies of Homer, the visions of Leonardo da Vinci, and the philosophies of Plato.

This were a consummation devoutly to be wished, but we shall have to wait. Meanwhile, it is possible for almost anybody to install in his home instruments to place him in instant touch with the most beautiful things musicians have ever said or sung.

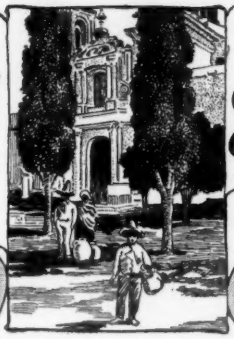
A great audience, as I have observed before in this magazine, is necessary if we are to have a great creative music. Lack of early advantages or lack of present opportunities is a small excuse for failing to qualify oneself for this audience. Though you live in a weed-grown town, on an almost abandoned farm, or in the fastnesses of the Yukon, it is now possible for you to become a scholar in music and a judge of what is worth hearing and worth rehearing. For this artistic revolution we must thank machinery.

INFLUENCE

ONE kindly deed has wakened chivalry
Within a thousand breasts—one little word,
Spoken with but intent to cheer one heart,
The whole wide world has heard.

BETH SLATER WHITSON.

INGRATITUDE OF MAN



By Carter Goodloe

IT was Wilcarnis' first consular appointment—not a very brilliant one, as Gilbey carefully explained to him in the club smoking-room.

"I understand—of course it is only a stepping-stone," interrupted Wilcarnis, eagerly hopeful.

Gilbey smoked an instant in silence.

"It's probably the smallest stepping-stone you ever saw," he said at length, with gentle irony. "I rather think I remember the place—a little town on the Tehuantepec railroad. Had to stop over there one night on my way to Salina Cruz, when my chief sent me over last year on that insurance business of poor Monty Roberts'. Good Lord! it was awful. Regular hole in the ground."

"I was given to understand that San Geronimo was a small but flourishing town," faltered little Wilcarnis.

"More in the line of a missionary than a consul, I should say," observed Gilbey judiciously. "There aren't twenty-five white people in the place and not a hundred pure Mexicans. Most of the population consists of Indians, who go around *al fresco* pretty much all the time."

"Why—why should a consul be sent to such a place as you describe?" demanded poor Wilcarnis.

"Is there any place on the face of the earth where the British government won't send a consul? Why, I read only the other day of a poor devil who was sent to southern Abyssinia. It took him a month by caravan to reach the God-forsaken spot."

"I had visions of a delightful tropical city," began Wilcarnis.

Gilbey laughed cruelly.

"My boy, you've got a couple of months before you have to report for duty at San Geronimo, and my advice to you is to stay right here in Mexico City until 'the last call for dinner,' as Wilkins says. Wilkins is my American chum. We'll do our best by you so that you'll at least have something pleasant to remember in your exile. And don't be too downcast. We all have our troubles," he added darkly.

Gilbey was as good as his word and honored in full the note of introduction which Wilcarnis had presented from Howard, Gilbey's old Winchester form-fellow. He took him to Sylvain's and the new theater and the bull-ring—it was the season—and although Wilcarnis nominally lived at the Reforma Hotel in the broad sunny Paseo, he spent two-thirds of his time at Gilbey's pleasant quarters in Buena Vista Avenue.

Wilcarnis was enchanted with the one-storied pink stucco house, the cool brick floors, the heavily shaded windows through which the hot sunlight could not even filter, and the tropical *patio* where a brilliantly colored macaw swung and scolded amid the India-

rubber plants and fan palms. It was all delightfully new and strange to Wilcarnis, who had never been out of England before, except to make a tour of cockney Switzerland and on Paris shopping expeditions with his sisters.

They made him very much at home, Gilbey and his two chums who had the house together, Wilkins the American agent for a big sewing-machine firm, and Wilfrid Brooks, the second secretary of the British legation. Wilcarnis liked nothing better than to lie on a cool divan in the darkened salon and listen to Brooks pick out the airs from the latest musical comedies—Brooks had been home the summer before and was looked up to as an authority on such things—or after dinner it was extremely pleasant to sit sociably smoking in the fragrant *patio* and listen to the talk of the three men who represented a variety of interest and thrilling adventure to the untraveled Wilcarnis.

They treated the proud and happy young consul as though he were one of them, and little by little he learned something of their histories and ambitions—that young Brooks was hoping for a second-secretaryship at Washington and the announcement of his engagement to the Honorable Evelyn Milward; that Wilkins had made an immense success of the Bird sewing-machine in darkest Mexico—he had so strewn the country with them that it was a common sight to see them in thatched huts operated gaily by scantily attired native women—and was daily expecting his reward in the shape of a junior partnership and the hand of the youngest Miss Bird.

Being of an amebalike simplicity of character, Wilcarnis had poured out his own uneventful history early in the acquaintance, and Gilbey especially had seemed inclined to value his confidence. There was something peculiarly sympathetic to Gilbey in the young consular appointee with his unfailing good nature and happy optimism.

Plainly, Gilbey was neither optimistic nor happy, and little Wilcarnis worried over him a good deal in secret. He knew that Gilbey's business, the "Royal Liverpool Insurance Company," with headquarters in San Francisco Street, was in a most flourishing condition, and never in all his talks had he ever mentioned any family troubles, so that Wilcarnis couldn't make out what it was that was troubling him.

It was Gilbey himself who, one evening when their friendship was about a month old, suddenly illuminated Wilcarnis' perturbed mind. They were sitting alone in the *patio,* Brooks having gone to a dinner at the American embassy and Wilkins to the theater. The moonlight drenched the succulent rubber leaves in a bright radiance, and from across the *avenida* came the sound of a guitar and a Mexican love-song. The white smoke from their cigars curled away on the fragrant air as they puffed in silence. Suddenly Gilbey leaned back in his chair and held out his "Porfirio Diaz," knocking away the ash meditatively.

"Ever been engaged, Wilcarnis?" he asked bluntly.

Wilcarnis blushed to the roots of his fair hair. Gilbey missed the blush—he was gazing in melancholy fashion at the moon which was just appearing over the *patio*—but Wilcarnis' disavowal was so forcible that Gilbey withdrew his gaze from the heavens and looked at him suspiciously.

"Ever been in love?"

"Never—that is, once I came pretty near it; in fact, I was in love, but, of course, I never had a chance." Wilcarnis was speaking breathlessly and disconnectedly. "There was a girl—I saw her at Lucerne—I never met her—never knew her name, but I knew she might have been the one for me—only she was engaged—I saw the ring on her finger. She was too pretty not to be engaged, you know, and so—I went away—I didn't want to stay, you see."

Gilbey grunted.

"And a jolly good thing for you that you ran. My boy"—Gilbey leaned over and laid a paternal hand on little Wilcarnis' knee—"don't ever get tied up if you can help it. Run every time if necessary. This thing of being engaged is the devil!"

Wilcarnis stared at his friend in shocked, fascinated silence.

"Then you are not engaged," he managed to say at length. Gilbey smiled bitterly.

"Ah, but I am. It isn't a thing I talk much about. One's mistakes don't make pleasant conversation, as a rule."

"Mistakes?"

"Yes, it was a mistake—the worst one I ever made. I know I deserve to have you think me a confounded cad." Gilbey frowned and flung away his half-smoked cigar. "Of course I wouldn't speak of it to any of the fellows here, to any one who will meet her——"

"Of course not," assented Wilcarnis sympathetically. He was glad Gilbey looked at it in that way; his own gentlemanly sensibilities had undoubtedly been shocked at first by Gilbey's attitude.

"But hang it all! It is a relief to speak of it to you, Wilcarnis." By this time Gilbey was pacing up and down the *patio*, like an Isthmian tiger.

Wilcarnis drew a deep breath and braced himself for the revelation. "If it's any relief to you, Gilbey," he began tentatively.

"I've got only myself to thank, and there are other fellows right here in Mexico City in the same box," Gilbey flung out from the end of the *patio*. "I've only done what others have done. I hadn't known her long, but I thought I loved her and I was coming out here. It was the separation that hurried everything. You see, I couldn't leave her without settling things and—and so she accepted me, and said she'd wait for me." He sank down in his chair again and lit a cigarette with a trembling hand.

"And now?" murmured little Wilcarnis.

Gilbey turned on him fiercely. "Now, don't you see everything is changed? *I've* changed, too—I'm a different man. I'm not the Gilbey who thought he was in love! Four years of separation, of growth, of a strange, new existence for me—— Oh, can't you understand how I feel?" Gilbey groaned in the extremity of his misery.

"Perhaps she has changed, too; perhaps she has forgotten——" began Wilcarnis hopefully.

Gilbey turned a blazing eye upon him, and the suggestion shriveled on Wilcarnis' lip.

"Changed! Forgotten! My dear fellow, you don't know women. Read this!" And he drew a cablegram from his pocket and tossed it over to Wilcarnis.

For an instant there was a silence while little Wilcarnis made out the message by the light of the moon. It was signed "L. M.," and the purport of it was clear and to the point. He handed it back to Gilbey as carefully as though it had been a high explosive.

"When did this come?" asked Wilcarnis under his breath.

"This afternoon. But I have felt for some time that it must come. She—she has been awfully unhappy at home—there is a stepmother—and of course she turns to me. She's coming out here to marry me in three weeks." Gilbey's mournful voice trailed off into inarticulateness.

"I—I should think it would make a chap feel confoundedly happy—and—lucky and—that sort of thing to have a girl as fond of him as she seems to be of you, Gilbey," stammered little Wilcarnis in a burst of emotion and blushing furiously again.

Gilbey turned wearily in his chair. "How would you like to marry a stranger in three weeks? For she is a stranger to me. It seems a thousand years ago since that summer we knew each other. It's all like a dream. I wish I could wake up."

"What are you going to do about it, poor old chap?"

"Go through with it, of course. I'm not a scoundrel or a coward, either." Gilbey was breathing hard.

Little Wilcarnis stood up and stretched out a sympathetic hand. "Good night, Gilbey. I wish I could help some way or other. You know I'm your friend and that there's nothing I wouldn't do for you."

"I'm sure of it, old fellow, and you've helped me by just letting me talk this over with you. There's not another soul to whom I could have mentioned it."

"I'm glad you felt you could repose this confidence in me, Gilbey, and you may rely on me from to-night never to speak of this again, even to you," said little Wilcarnis grandly.

But this was the last thing Gilbey wanted. He wanted to talk, to unburden his soul, and having once opened himself to Wilcarnis, the temptation to continue to do so became irresistible. During the two following weeks, Gilbey poured out the bitterness of his soul to little Wilcarnis, who was all sympathy and discretion.

The third week Gilbey took to his bed. The nearness of the catastrophe overwhelmed him. Too much of a gentleman to shirk his duty, he was yet too sensitive a soul to meet his fate with calmness. The congratulations which poured in upon him—for the announcement of his engagement and approaching marriage to Miss Letty Manning had been made—only increased the secret unhappiness which was consuming him. As the day approached when the *City of London* was due to arrive at Vera Cruz with Miss Manning aboard, Gilbey grew worse and worse, and it was little Wilcarnis who made all the arrangements. It was Wilcarnis who rushed around and suggested to Mrs. Jerrold, the wife of the British consul, to invite the English girl to her house on her arrival in Mexico City; it was Wilcarnis who saw the Reverend Mr. Montague, minister of the English Church, and arranged for the ceremony; it was Wilcarnis who asked Gilbey's ushers, and bought Gilbey's wedding-ring; and it was finally Wilcarnis who had to go down to Vera Cruz to meet the bride.

This last duty Gilbey had honestly intended to perform himself, but Brooks and Wilkins and little Wilcarnis held a consultation over his prostrate form, and decided that if Gilbey wanted to go through the ceremony without fainting away or otherwise disgracing himself, he had better stay in bed and let some one else go down to Vera Cruz and bring the bride up to Mexico City.

Of course Wilcarnis was the first to offer his services, and Gilbey gratefully accepted them. Even a respite of thirty-six hours seemed like a godsend, Gilbey acknowledged with shame to himself.

"You've done so much for me, I hate to ask this of you, too, Wilcarnis," he said. "You've put me under everlasting obligations to you. I feel like a damned coward." And Gilbey hid his head in the bedclothes.

"Don't mention it, Gilbey," replied little Wilcarnis earnestly. "How often have I told you that I'd do anything for you? You've been deucedly good to me since I struck Mexico City, and now that my time here is up and I've got to go on to San Geronimo, I'm only too glad to do this last favor—if you call it that—for you. I wish to God I could really do something to pull you out of this hole!"

"I ought to be shot, but——" And Gilbey rambled off again into a recital of his woes, his mistakes, and the dire consequences to the girl who loved and trusted him.

"Don't think for a minute I blame you, Gilbey," said the patient Wilcarnis. "I understand just how it has all happened. Sometimes things just seem to get infernally mixed. You haven't run away as many a fellow might. It's confoundedly tough luck that your friends can't help you in a place like this, but this is where friendship doesn't cut much figure." And he sighed as he wrung Gilbey's hand in farewell and started for the Buena Vista Station.

He was to take the evening train which was scheduled to reach Vera Cruz at eight the next morning. This gave him plenty of time to meet the *City of London*, which was due about noon. He and Miss Manning would take the night train from Vera Cruz back to the capital, and in another twelve hours Wilcarnis' responsibility would be at an end and Gilbey in possession of his bride.

It must be confessed that, in spite of

his protestations of friendship for Gilbey, little Wilcarnis was anything but happy as he settled himself in a coach of the Mexican Railway, and prepared for the journey before him. Women were fearsome creatures to him, even viewed at a distance, and the mere thought of presenting himself to an unknown female and assuming charge of her for twenty-four hours reduced Wilcarnis to a nervous state bordering on collapse. The more he thought of it, the more appalling did his errand seem to him.

Sleep was out of the question. He went into the observation-car and gazed anxiously out into the night. By the light of the young moon Wilcarnis could make out the shimmering, wraith-like peaks of Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl, as the train rushed eastward toward Guadalupe, and the "White Woman" herself did not seem more formidable to him than did the unknown English girl steaming toward Vera Cruz. Downward through the night the train dropped; from Esperanza, down, down to Orizaba and Cordoba, toward the sea-level and Vera Cruz, and with every descending mile, Wilcarnis' courage sank, too.

But much as he pitied himself, his deepest commiseration was for the unfortunate and absent Gilbey. How different it would all be, he thought regretfully, were Gilbey hastening on his way to meet his bride, love in his heart and hope and joy his companions! Wilcarnis sighed. He could imagine, for he knew how different his own miserable feelings would be—and he blushed in the darkness as the audacious idea crossed his suffering brain—were "the girl at Lucerne" steaming westward to meet him!

It was an hour before the train was due to arrive from Vera Cruz when Gilbey received the despatch. He was propped up in bed, wondering whether he was not too feeble to go to the station to meet Wilcarnis and Miss Manning; and Wilkins and Brooks, who had foregathered in Gilbey's room to inform themselves of the patient's condition, were holding a consultation on the subject, when young Montague brought in the telegram.

Gilbey turned deathly pale when he caught sight of the bit of paper and tore it open with a faltering hand. It was a night-message, dated the day before, and was so long that it looked more like a confidential letter than a telegram. As he read his pallor gave place to a deep crimson. When he had finished he looked around at the three anxious men grouped about his bedside. He handed the message to Wilkins.

"Read that," he said in a tomblike voice. And Wilkins read:

"Met Miss Manning at dock. She is the girl at Lucerne. First and only love. Were married this afternoon. Bishop of Porto Rico. Going direct to San Geronimo. Overjoyed to help you. God bless you. Happiest man alive. WILCARNIS."

It was too monstrous to be true! As Gilbey realized that little Wilcarnis had appropriated the girl he was to marry, he felt a sudden and violent return of his old fondness for her. All memory of his own defection melted away in the hot flame of his anger against Wilcarnis. He had been treated outrageously by the man he had befriended! A poignant sense of injury, a great wave of self-pity swept over the indignant Gilbey. He thirsted for five minutes with Wilcarnis.

"And he called himself my friend," said Gilbey bitterly when he could speak. He was sitting up in bed by now, and the flush in his face made him look quite well and decidedly fierce.

"The scoundrel!"

"The—the low villain!"

"The betrayer of friendship!"

"What does he mean by 'overjoyed to help you'?" queried young Montague in a quavering voice.

"That's what I want to know," said Gilbey savagely. He was tearing at the bedclothes and punching the pillows in such a bloodthirsty way that Brooks was glad little Wilcarnis was safely on his way to San Geronimo. "That's what I want to know! Does he think stealing your fiancée from you, deliber-

ately alienating the affection of the girl who has loved and trusted you, the girl you are going to marry, and marrying her yourself, simply because—because you may have made an ass of yourself on a few—on several——" Gilbey was almost inarticulate by now —"occasions—is helping you?"

"Had no idea little Wilcarnis had sand enough to skiddoo with any girl in that romantic fashion," returned Wilkins.

"It's infernally scoundrelly of him, there's no denying it." And Brooks chewed at the ends of his mustache.

"He's a dirty villain," mumbled young Montague savagely.

Gilbey held up a trembling hand. "Wilcarnis is a villain if you like, and a scoundrel, and all the rest of it, but what hurts me most is his ingratitude" —Gilbey looked around upon his stricken hearers and spoke in a hollow voice —"the ingratitude of man!"



LOVE AND I

LOVE and I went wandering all on a summer day,
The red rose gave us greeting, the lilies lit our way,
And high above each lucent pool, a mated bird sang clear:
"Love is the lord of life and death at the flowering of the year."

Love and I went wandering an Indian summer day,
In every orchard apples burned, and every wood was gay;
Yet in a sheltered nook we heard a laggard robin flute:
"Love is the lord of life and death when flowers have come to fruit."

Love and I fared forth again all on a bitter day,
The good green world that laughed before all grim and icy lay;
And low beside a cottage-hearth we caught a fleeting breath:
"Love that has gone though life with me abides with me in death."

Love and I go faring on through fine or stormy weather,
Or smooth the way or rough the way we follow it together.
And ever from the shining heights, a faery voice we hear:
"Love ruleth life and time and space—and love is always near."

MARTHA MCCULLOCH-WILLIAMS.

THE CHAMPION

By MARGARITA SPALDING GERRY

IT was palpably a Washington boarding-house. No one could have mistaken it. The institutional hat-rack in the hall, flanked by "Belshazzar's Feast" and a framed floral supplement to the *Ladies Home Journal*, betrayed it. The old darky in shabby ministerial black who opened the door could have belonged to nothing else. Yet there was an atmosphere of informal comfort in the room into which Adams was ushered. The prehistoric velvet-covered "set" was disposed in chat-inviting groups, the sofa was mercifully hidden by a profusion of cushions, and the well-worn rug was of a cheerfully uncompromising red. Then, too, in spite of evident cleanliness, there was a pleasant suggestion of use in the homely disorder of the center-table with its green-shaded reading-lamp and piles of books and magazines. The old colored man who admitted Adams discovered some cigar ashes in a little tray, and removed them with an indignant muttering about "those no-count yaller gals!"

"Mr. Tucker Beverly, sah? I will inquire ef he is at home," he replied to Adams' question, in the painstaking accents of his race when it revels in the flourishes of "education." "Miss Joan came in 'bout five minutes ago," he said eagerly, with a subtle change of intonation.

John Francis Adams stared at him a moment with a slightly wooden expression. He had not called for "Miss Joan," he had never even heard of her.

"Won't you take a seat, sah?" And the old man fussed hospitably about him. "Here is the *Post*, sah, and last night's *Star*." He drew a chair beside the window, raised the shade to let in the mild spring air, opened the paper with a flourish, and shuffled away.

Mr. Adams gazed around him a moment with supercilious eyebrows, and then buried himself in his memorandum-book. He really had very little time to spare for this interview; anyway, he felt he was making rather an ass of himself by following up this matter of postmasters' claims. He was new to the House, and young enough to be self-conscious where his dignity was concerned. There had been some carelessly suppressed smiles over his interest in the circular letter of this "Tucker Beverly, Esquire, of Kentucky."

Mason had said: "So the old man has tackled you, has he? He's great on new members."

Adams hated to be laughed at. The healthy red in his clear skin deepened at the thought of it—he had the complexion that goes with red hair and is so plentifully protected with freckles all one's boyhood that it emerges childishly pure, to the confusion of manly affectations.

Still, Adams had read the communication in a methodical, painstaking way, and was more than half convinced of the justice of the case, even though it was set forth with a verbosity and sometimes an intemperance of style that

worried him. Adams had brought with him, together with the Harvard man's conviction that it is the duty of every gentleman to further free trade and ultimately save the country, a carefully hidden idealism which had survived a prosperous law practise in Boston.

He was anxious to "purify politics." He had, too, the sympathy of a sound and healthy nature with the under dog, and it struck him that these Southern postmasters had been badly used by the dingy morality of the Reconstruction Period. He had determined to inform himself further of the matter. But he had no intention of taking any action with regard to it, he told himself now. It was nearly five, too, and he had a lot of correspondence to get off before he dined with the Hillman-Houghs. Adams was entertained rather extensively, in spite of being a member, by the discriminating few in Washington who knew who the really good Massachusetts families were. The fortune, too, of his old sea-captain grandfather, thriftily turned over many times, gilded the young gentleman's close-cropped red head. The long wait made him regret his interest in the cases.

"He forgot my card, too," he grumbled. "I shall have to do a lot of explaining."

The darky reappeared.

"Mr. Beverly, sah, am out, but Miss Joan will descend to the parlor," he announced ceremoniously. Then, with an abrupt change of tone, and sidling up to Adams with his confidence:

"I tole Miss Joan she bettah lay right there on her baid tell dinner-time. She shore am all tired out, aftah dis hole day in dat offus. I doan' know what they thinkin' about to keep her there all day when she ain' got home tell one o'clock from the Cahtahs'. But Miss Joan she would come"—looking severely at Adams to see if he appreciated the honor done him. "Miss Joan——"

He darted out into the hall. Some one was coming down the stairs.

Out in the hall there was a remonstrating rumble, then a voice, a delicious voice, with an underlying ripple of laughter overlaid with beguiling pathos.

"Now, Augustus, go 'way. You certainly do worry me to death. No—I didn't get my feet wet. You go downstairs. He isn't going to eat me up. And Miss Mollie won't like it a bit, you know you have lots to do before dinner. No, I'm not tired——"

She was still laughing when she entered the room and met Adams' direct brown eyes, singularly disconcerting with their light lashes and level gaze.

The first glance conveyed to Adams little more than an impression of grace. The slender figure drooped a little as if from the fatigue of the day. Adams told himself he wasn't especially impressed with this redoubtable "Miss Joan." But then Adams was annoyed, the absurdity of being caught this way, when he had come on business, and very little time for it, too. And now this girl—it would take him ten minutes at least to get away decently.

The girl was looking at him from a pair of very clear hazel eyes. They had a pretty droop in the upper lids, and they were darkly shaded.

"My father is not at home," she said. "He will regret it so much—and the loss of your time. Could you not leave a message with me?"

"I beg your pardon—I'm afraid," he stumbled along awkwardly. "It was just a matter of some cases——"

"The post-office cases?" she asked quickly.

"Yes, I was interested——"

She looked at him quickly.

"You're not a claimant," she decided immediately.

He surprised her by smiling delightfully.

"Well, no," he said modestly. "The cases date from sixty-four, don't they? I can't claim such hoary antiquity."

"You might have been a son of one of them," she protested.

"No, I'm merely here to ask for information."

"You don't look like a reporter," she said musingly.

"No, I'm only a member from Massachusetts."

"Oh—how funny! Why, you look so young!" She burst into irresistible

laughter. "It seems so odd, you know. You must look so queer up there with those musty old things—they are musty, some of them," she said apologetically.

Adams' boyish sensitiveness had taken alarm; he was crimson.

"I don't see anything so humorous about it. They thought me old enough to elect me," he said haughtily.

She was serious in an instant; the hazel eyes looked at him pathetically, then brightened.

"And you are really interested in the cases," she said. "How lovely! Father will be so happy—and so sorry he is out. Perhaps I can tell you what you want to know," she added hopefully.

"I'm afraid you couldn't, really"—he did want to be kind to her—"I want to know a little more about the history of the cases."

Miss Beverly seated herself promptly. Adams noted to himself that what she really wore was a white blouse with a trim dark skirt; he had had the impression of a Doucet costume—if that was what Cousin Maude was always talking about.

"I think I can tell you what you want to know," she said, with modest conviction.

"I don't believe you understand——"

"Oh, yes, I do." She smiled with superior knowledge. "The law was framed to remedy a great outrage, sir."

She was leaning back in her chair, her hands interlaced under her softly rounded chin, her eyes almost closed and looking into space. Her voice took on a pompous sonorousness.

"Prior to the Act of June 4, 1864, the postmasters in the States south of Mason's and Dixon's line were paid the merest pittance, based on the returns of ten years before. In many cases the business had increased enormously during the term of office, entailing great expenditure for office-rent and clerk-hire to discharge duties, which, under their oath of office, they were bound to perform. To remedy these abuses the Act of June 4, 1864, was framed and passed, an act which directed that the salaries should be paid on a basis of commissions determined by a biennial readjustment applied retroactively. But a rogue and shyster——"

Adams started violently at these astounding words. But there was no shade of emotion in her voice, it was smooth and sonorous as ever. It went on and on, its eloquence submerging him in a sea of sound until he felt himself losing all consciousness of meaning. "The Act of June 4" recurred rhythmically; he occasionally distinguished "The post-office department"; and "rogue" and "shyster" and "ignoramus" seemed alarmingly frequent; otherwise, he found himself helplessly watching the movement of her daintily curved upper lip, with the tiny mole at the upper right-hand corner which seemed to have been placed there by coquettish design.

Miss Beverly paused a moment—to become aware that her guest was watching her dumbly, with amazed eyes and half-open mouth. Suddenly she went off into a spasm of laughter.

"Oh, please don't look like that, please, please don't!" she gasped. "Indeed I won't do it any more! I can stop, really I can!"

"How—how did you learn it all?" he managed to ask.

"How could I help it?" she demanded tragically. "I'm a whole life-saving service in myself. If you knew father ——" She paused dramatically. "He was never known to stop talking of the post-office cases of his own accord. We have timed him. One evening—just in the course of ordinary conversation—he talked from seven to eleven. There were relays of listeners; every one of Cousin Mollie's boarders volunteered. And I finally steered him off to bed, still good for as much more. Whenever I see an expression of distress on the face of the person he's talking to, I offer myself a vicarious atonement. You don't wonder now, do you?"

Adams with difficulty looked away from her mischievous face and felt it necessary to disapprove. The Radcliffe and Vassar girls with whom he had a limited fellowship would never have been so unfilial. And yet the little face

was so charming! But it changed again sharply.

"It's his life, you know?" she said simply, and somehow her tone brought the moisture to his eyes. "Still one has to laugh sometimes, people do look so hopeless." She gurgled again irrepressibly. "And it is remarkable that any one can talk so long. But he is wonderful, Mr. Adams." She faced him with shining eyes. "For forty years now he has fought this thing, he won't give it up. Every administration is against him, he has been laughed at, denounced, insulted. But year after year, never doubting that he will win in the end—for his postmasters who have become like his own—he defies the whole government. I think he rather likes to fight." She laughed uncertainly. "Everything he had has gone of course; he was wealthy in the beginning—they really ought to give us a rebateage on stamps. But I wouldn't have him give it up. Don't you see, it would mean confessed failure? Most of the poor old postmasters are dead, they've had such hard lives there in the South, the older men who can't adapt themselves. People begin to call the cases 'dead claims.' But he hasn't given up, he never will—it would kill him, I think." There were tears in her eyes now.

Adams, with a tender impulse of sympathy, amazingly new to him, turned his eyes away from her and fumbled clumsily with the papers that he had brought. When he looked up she was daintily calm as ever. He felt convinced of the justice of the cases.

Adams found it imperatively necessary to come back to the business discussion.

"Can you tell me why adjustments were made retroactively?" he asked.

"No, indeed, I don't understand a thing about it," she laughed.

He looked his astonishment.

"Oh, I'm just a human phonograph," she said gravely. "A phonograph doesn't have to understand. And then it's the men I feel for—and my father. It has meant so much to them, this hope of a little money; and to him, too."

"Perhaps you can tell me a little, then, of what you feel?" he suggested gently.

And tell him she did, simply, clearly, the story of the attempt to right the wrong done to these thousands of country postmasters; how her father had come to Washington from Kentucky to press the claims for his clients, and had remained; how he had secured the passage of the law, which had fallen stillborn from its passage because of the antipathy to everything Southern in the years following the war.

"If he had been willing to bribe—they call it giving 'fees,'" she explained, with a simplicity that was instinct with contempt, "he might have succeeded long ago. Just lately a man named Wilcox——" She checked herself. "It makes them angry, you know, when he refuses—and he isn't very tactful about it—and then he has made another enemy. It has been so long now that it is necessary to have another law passed to execute the first. But our friends were very kind, and they got an office for me; you don't know how pleasant it is, too. We really get along delightfully. Of course I have given up all hope, but it is so much better for father to hold on to it. Just last year we really thought it was going through in the House, but there was no one to engineer it properly, so it fell through. We can't always spare as much money out of my salary for postage as father thinks he needs, but——" She suddenly realized how much she was saying and blushed painfully.

But Adams for once was oblivious of the breach of good form.

"Does he——" he began indignantly, and then he, too, checked himself. This thing was getting on his nerves. He rose suddenly and held out his hand. All his stiffness came back.

"Are you thinking of—looking into it?" Joan inquired wistfully.

He took her hand. "I shall take it up," he said as if a gage had been flung before him.

Joan watched him from the window. He walked down the street with his chin up. Joan looked at her hand,

tingling still from his grasp, with affectionate interest.

"And I don't even know his name," she said.

II.

On the third of March, nearly a year after the April day when he had met Joan—and incidentally, the last day of the short session—Adams telephoned Mr. Beverly to come to the House. His bill had been reported by the post-office committee and was to be voted on. The message was delivered while the Kentuckian and his daughter were still at dinner.

Joan helped her father silently into his greatcoat and then hurried on her own wraps. They went out into the street, quiet at this time in that dignified quarter of older Washington that lies west of the White House and south of the Avenue. It was still day, but the raw chill in the air was disheartening. Father and daughter squared their shoulders and walked bravely down the street. Joan even smiled to herself; she was glad that the end was in view. But in the car when she caught her father's eye she stopped smiling. He, too, was thinking that it was the end.

Adams had interested Ambrose Walker, the junior senator from his State, in Beverly's bill—Walker needed the Adams clan in his fight for another term. "A Bill Providing for the Readjustment of Postmasters' Salaries Under the Act of June 12, 1870," had been dexterously slipped through the Senate during an interim of the tariff debate in the closing days of the long session. A moment had been seized when there was a majority of Southern members and of Walker's especial cronies. The opposition to it had not been tested.

As Joan and her father took possession of two seats in the front row of the gallery, happily vacant, they were conscious of rather more than the usual disorder in the auditorium below. It was so near the end of the session that the members, like great schoolboys, were growing restive under the necessary routine of business. Apparently the bill had not been read. Pages were hurrying about, groups were gathered in informal discussion of all sorts of topics, there was a general stir and unrest in the air.

Joan shivered a little. The cold outside had chilled her, and her trim, well-fitting walking-suit was not very heavy—one really needed furs in this weather.

"Well, if the bill goes through, I can have them, ermine and seal, if I want. Wouldn't it be heavenly to have enough money!" For a moment the realization of the comparative wealth that the fees from the thousands of cases would mean dazzled her. And she let herself enjoy it for a moment before she put it away. It was dangerous to hope, it was safer to prepare against defeat—but Joan had had to starve herself of so many things. How could she tide her father over the shock of failure? He was so confident.

She looked at him, admired for the hundredth time the noble toss of iron-gray hair over the magnificent forehead, the brilliant eyes overhung with bushy eyebrows, the bold curve of his nose—and sighed. She felt sure that if he were defeated this time he would never rally, he was too old. Joan was not quite herself, despondency was easier than hope.

The Speaker's gavel sounded, the clerk was reading something. A phrase or so ascended to them. Tucker Beverly sniffed the approaching battle like an old war-horse. He leaned over the balcony as if he would direct his cohorts. He turned to his daughter.

"Well, Joan, it's on!"

She smiled tenderly at him.

"Are you confident, father?"

"Yes, yes, we can't fail." He spoke almost angrily. "Adams has prepared the ground thoroughly. I could hardly have done it better. They can't be such fools and scoundrels. There is just one thing I don't like. That shyster of a Wilcox, that puppy from Indiana—you know, he wanted me to give him a fee for putting it through." He spoke with fine contempt. "Well, he's fighting it all he can, Adams telephoned me

yesterday. Adams doesn't think, though——" He stopped to listen. There was a cessation of the clerk's monotonous voice, another was speaking.

But Joan wasn't listening. Adams' name had started her into a revery. She was in the grasp of profound depression. Wilcox, her father, the bill, even Adams' energy, what were they to her? He hadn't been to see her for three weeks. The memories of their meeting, the visits to confer with her father which had grown into calls on herself, the long happy weeks which Adams, under pretext of business, had idled away in the heat of a Washington summer—with her whenever he could be—the weeks of her "leave" in the Shenandoah valley, where he, too, had contrived to be, the joy of his clean vigorous life, the firmness of his lips under the close-cropped mustache, the look in his eyes—what was the possibility of a few thousands to these?

And what if the bill were defeated? She couldn't feel much worse. He hadn't been to see her for three weeks! And it had surely meant something when he looked at you that way and said: "I'm almost afraid to risk it, but I've got to tell you—something—tomorrow." He must have meant—something when he said it that way. Her face scorched when she remembered how her lips had trembled. What could have happened? There must have been something. But if he didn't care, after all——

There seemed to be a debate going on. But everything was passing before Joan in a haze and she scarcely heard. She saw her father glare down on a tight-lipped Vermont farmer who spoke warningly of the millions involved in the cases and advocated economy. A clear-featured gentleman from Alabama spoke sympathetically of the privations of the claimants, the justice of the claims. With a sudden tightening of her breath, she recognized Adams when he rose, looking absurdly boyish in his rough business suit. She heard every word he said.

He spoke slowly, unemotionally. He stated the principles involved clearly enough, but so dispassionately that he seemed indifferent. Joan clenched her hands with rage at his coolness. It seemed leveled at her.

Another man rose; was recognized. She lapsed again into apathy, until she heard a smothered, furious ejaculation from her father. She leaned forward again. Adams was still standing. She heard Wilcox—whom she vaguely remembered having seen—say something about "a personal interest of the gentleman from Massachusetts in the case he is so ably presenting." He spoke with an unmistakable sneer. Joan understood. There was a sudden silence, the men around the speaker listened. Adams stammered, tried to speak, his face was drenched in a flood of crimson. Men exchanged glances.

Joan was in agony.

"Oh, why does he look like that? It makes him seem guilty! Say something! Say something!" She almost screamed it aloud.

Mr. Beverly half rose from his seat and tried to speak. The man next to him pulled him down.

Adams instinctively turned his burning face toward the gallery, and met Joan's eyes. The shamed color ebbed back—it had almost killed him that he, John Francis Adams the third, should be so attacked. He was white now. He spoke with concentrated contempt.

"The gentleman from Indiana has suggested to me in private this interpretation of my motives. He first spoke to me three weeks ago——"

A shiver of understanding passed through Joan. Three weeks! But why had it been visited on her? He had seen her father.

"At that time I demanded that he propose an inquiry before the House. As far as I know he has taken no such steps. He—doubtless has his own motives for not desiring an investigation." Adams was keeping an iron grip on himself. "But the 'tu quoque' is not a dignified form of argument. I prefer to state that if any proof can be offered that I am acting otherwise than from a firm conviction of the justice of these

claims, I will resign my seat in this assembly without delay. I demand the investigation which the gentleman has refused to make. Has he direct charges to offer? I refuse to answer innuendo."

He waited a moment. Wilcox, still sneering, but with an attempt at facetiousness, said:

"I had no intention of suggesting an interest beyond one surely pardonable in so youthful a legislator. 'He who loves a rosy cheek, or a coral lip admires,' can only sympathize with our young friend from Massachusetts."

A few members who knew Adams laughed indulgently, to many who had not heard clearly it was an unintelligible interlude. But there were others who had been made to believe there was something sinister in the affair. And Joan understood Adams' desertion.

Adams waited coldly for Wilcox to finish, waited again for further comments. There were none, and he went on. But Joan's distressed face, his suppressed rage at Wilcox, had done their work. This time his words burned themselves on the consciousness.

There was silence when he ended:

"And now the final issue is before us. These men whom the United States government has defrauded have had a hope in their lives, in many cases the only prospect of anything outside the most meager satisfaction of bodily needs. Many have died with that hope still unsatisfied. To many children it has been the only legacy. We have it in our power to-day to destroy this hope of justice, or to right—as far as may be after the ravage of years—the wrong that was done. We can glorify into success the almost incredible labor of the man who—for these people—has fought a powerful government single-handed. We can prove that the United States is too great to repudiate its just debts. We may do justice that good may come."

He took his seat. There was the murmur that may mean much or little. A few men gathered around Adams; Wilcox hurried off to rally his henchmen. There was no more debate. The measure was read again by the clerk. It was put to vote.

Mr. Beverly, his hands on the railing, stared straight in front of him, motionless. Joan gripped the arm of her chair in terror. She knew that this meant a trial for life or death for her father. He had staked his highest wager. He was old. If he failed he could never fight again. Her own trouble was forced into the background, there was only her father. She tried to speak to him, but no words came. She put out her hand to him, but it fell on his arm unnoticed. The old hero was waiting his verdict—alone.

To Joan's amazement—so impossible did success seem to her at that moment—as the interminable roll was called, the ayes really seemed in the majority. She glanced at her father, he was busy counting. When, however, they were past the middle of the alphabet, and the ayes were clearly in the majority, his face began to flush and he cast a triumphant glance toward his daughter.

Suddenly the roll-call ceased. They all bent forward to see what was the cause of it. The Speaker, avowedly hostile, was sending out pages in all directions. Tucker Beverly groaned—he knew the ruse. They were sending out for men who would vote against the bill, and defeat it. He sank back in his seat with a groan; the knife, which he had been nervously opening and shutting, cut deeply into his finger.

Joan started, sick at the sight of blood, and then quietly bound her handkerchief about his hand. The old man never knew it. He sat looking vacantly out over the auditorium, his knotted hands sprawled inertly on his knees.

Joan's eyes were clinging desperately to Adams in this crisis which she vaguely understood. He was following, with a white set face the ominous repetition of "No" that rewarded the Speaker's recruiting. They were among the "U's" in the alphabet. Suddenly Adams caught sight, through the open door, of two friends of his in the lobby, Vickery of Delaware and Watson from Indiana. He beckoned a page to him, wrote a hasty note to each, and sent the page

off. He waited in tense suspense; he had lost the count, but he was afraid the vote had gone against them. Vickery and Watson sauntered toward their desks in time to say "Aye." Four more votes, evenly divided, closed the list.

Mr. Beverly had heard nothing since the Speaker's men had voted. He was in a stupor of despair. Joan was looking at him with a sick throbbing in her heart when Adams' note was brought to him. Joan read over his shoulder. It said:

You have won. Ayes, 203; Nos, 202.

Mr. Beverly looked at the paper a moment, unbelieving. Then he straightened his shoulders with a long sigh. He rose mechanically.

"Oh, father!" said Joan.

He didn't hear her.

"I must lose no time, I must tell them," he said. And Joan, half laughing, half crying, followed in his wake.

In the lobby he was besieged. He had become a feature of the place, and men who had been too indolent or too self-interested to work for him were good-naturedly glad he had won. He brushed them away serenely. His form became more erect. He was not elated, he had merely come into his own.

Adams appeared and walked up to him with outstretched hands.

"Come, come, we have a great deal to do," said Beverly eagerly. "We must telegraph them all to-night."

"Father, dear, that's impossible." Joan was watching his rising excitement with some anxiety. "You must get some sleep."

"Sleep! Sleep!" he said impatiently. "Do you suppose I could sleep when they do not know? We must telegraph to-night. I am going home to prepare the lists."

"Father!" Joan touched his arm gently, she was laughing mischievously. "Do you know it would take thousands of dollars to send your telegrams!"

"Well, what of that?" demanded the old man.

"Where are you secreting your fortune?" demanded Joan, with mock indignation.

"Why—no—I haven't the money, have I?" he said blankly. "But I must have some. I must notify them."

"Now, father," said Joan, "they have waited all these years, they can wait a few days longer."

"They mustn't wait a day longer," he said irritably. "It's just that that I can't bear. Why, one of them, a man from Laurentia, in Alabama, wrote me just to-day. He was bedridden, helpless; they were going to foreclose a mortgage. He begged me to buy his claim, to save him. Only this morning, and I couldn't do it." He turned away, but not before they had seen the painful tears gleaming angrily in his eyes. He dashed them away with an indignant knuckle.

"I think I can arrange it, Mr. Beverly." Adams' quiet, matter-of-fact voice fell gratefully upon their distress. "A friend of mine in the Associated Press will send a despatch that will reach them just as quickly. It will be in all the morning papers. And—the man in Laurentia will be attended to. I will see that the money is advanced. But you must prepare the message immediately. Miss Beverly and I will wait here for you."

Mr. Beverly hurried away. Joan watched him wistfully. She was telling herself that she could be glad for him even if his success had set a barrier between herself and her—love. She even said the word to herself now that she knew it was hopeless. She knew Adams' sensitive regard for his reputation. And she was the daughter of the man whose bill he had championed! Wilcox had opened her eyes to the way men look at such things.

"Joan!" said Adams wistfully.

She turned to him.

"Are you not glad?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," she said—most unjoyfully.

"Joan! I can't stand it! I have been trying to keep away, but I can't go on like this. I've—but you can't know what it has been."

Joan smiled a little sadly to herself—and said nothing.

"I hadn't thought. I suppose I was a blessed innocent—but—well, I couldn't think of things like that when I was seeing you. And I didn't see anything but you. So when that—man opened on me three weeks ago it rather knocked me over. You know what that man said, that I had been—influenced. You know what a lie that was. You know that nothing but the justice of the case had a feather-weight of influence with me."

Joan gave him one quick look, and then was discreetly silent.

"But no one would believe that. If—if things had turned out as I wished—— Confound it, Joan, they would have been sure—— Oh, what a mess it all is!" he groaned.

And Joan still said nothing.

"Look here, Joan, you know I love you, don't you?"

She started to deny it and said "Yes" instead.

"And—do you love me, Joan?" His tone was boyishly beseeching.

This time her "Yes" was braver.

"I can't give you up! I won't! But—they'll say it was just an indirect way of getting the money, when you—marry me."

Joan raised her eyes. When they met his, those eyes, hazel, dark-fringed, with their adorable droop in the white upper lids, he suddenly knew how less than nothing was the clatter of scandalous tongues. And he blushed that he had not known it before.

"You're right, Joan, you're right—my——" His arms raised themselves spasmodically. He looked around him angrily.

"Good Lord, Joan, let's get out of this!" he said.

SONG

THE dream is o'er, and we awake;
The morn is sweet and fair,
Deep in the purple-scented brake,
A bird song woos the air;
Up the glad causeway of the east
The sun leaps evermore,
Anon the noon shall spread her feast—
Dear Love, the dream is o'er.

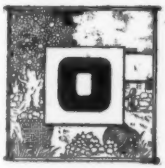
The dream is o'er, we did not deem,
Dear Love, the stars would fade,
We did not deem 'twas but a dream
Of youth all undismayed.
Look, where adown the saffron west
Day leads her royal train;
Within mine arms, upon my breast,
Come, Love, and dream again.

ROBERT LOVEMAN.

PLAYS AND PLAYERS

By A FIRST NIGHTER

From barber to evangelist. Religion as the basis of a drama. Sermons upon the stage. The Associate Players. "The Servant in the House" a play of ideas and daring, performed in a well-nigh flawless manner. Clyde Fitch's "Girls," although a silly little play, has "caught on." "The Royal Mounted" neither bad nor good—perhaps polite melodrama. In "Don Quixote" E. H. Sothern makes plausible, appealing and vivid the great character of the Sorrowful Knight



NCE there was a man living in a small city of Central New York who had tried various occupations without coming within even shouting distance of prosperity. He had what his neighbors called a "gift of gab," an endowment which may be fully explained by the information that his regular trade was that of barber.

As he leaned over his patients in the barber's chair he rehearsed his monologues hourly until at length he became imbued with the idea that he was a lecturer of force and magnetism. Previously he had invested his talents in sign-painting, paper-hanging and landscape-gardening, and had permitted his wife to take in boarders. None of these pursuits, however, satisfied the cravings of a restless ambition that goaded him on to honor without work.

He had drenched my face in lather one day and was drawing his razor over my chin, when suddenly he came to a full stop and blurted out:

"Hang me, if I don't try religion!"

I have every reason to believe that I was the last guest at his tonsorial receptions. He closed his little shop that very afternoon, and moved away. Five years later he was one of the best known evangelists and temperance exhorters in England.

Thus the theatrical manager, when all other schemes fail, turns to religion for the basis of his drama. And it is not surprising that Henry Miller, having tested his luck at musical comedy—the same being "The Lancers"—and encountered disaster, has gone to the other extreme and sought to preach a sermon—the same being "The Servant in the House"—at the regular box-office rates.

This is not written in disparagement of "The Servant in the House" which came to the Savoy Theater as a most appropriate offering of the Lenten season. It is merely in the way of reflection upon the forces at work in the contemporary theater, just the same as one might comment upon the personnel of Henry Miller's Associate Players, engaged in presenting the drama.

About the time that the founders of the New National Theater were promulgating detailed accounts of their plans, Mr. Miller airily announced that he had an individual scheme for the

uplift of the American drama and the establishment of a National Theater. By hearing him through one learned that he referred to this band of "Associate Players," and by examining the pedigree of these same Players one learned that every blessed member thereof was an Englishman.

However, "The Servant in the House" is worthy, precisely as every serious effort of Mr. Miller is worthy. Charles Rann Kennedy, its author, heretofore has been known in this country only as the husband of Edith Wynne Matthison, the delightful actress who portrayed *Everyman* in the quaint old morality play of that name. He now emerges from his marital and reflected glory as a playwright of ideas and daring.

"The Servant in the House" is in effect a modern morality play—a more intelligent attempt to accomplish what "The Struggle Everlasting" so ignominiously failed to attain earlier in the season. Its success or failure depends wholly upon the correct answer to the question: Do we, in any event, want a modern morality play? Is this the period when the play of symbolism and allegory will attract and hold? Personally, I have my doubts, and although the play is to be recommended for its boldness and uniqueness, the majority of playgoers will not find in it the entertainment they seek within a theater.

Audacious in the extreme is the introduction of the character named *Manson*, obviously representing the author's idea of the Son of Man. In *Manson's* relation to the other characters he is the *Bishop of Benares*, impersonating an East Indian butler in the house of his brother, the *Vicar*.

The intent to present *Manson* as the reincarnation of the Nazarene is not disguised, but rather emphasized in speech, facial resemblance, and carefully arranged pictures of the Savior on the walls of the vicarage. When the *Lord Bishop of Lancashire*, in a rage, turns on *Manson* and tells him that he should be flogged, even hung up and crucified, *Manson* replies:

"I have encountered similar hostility before from men of your class."

Bold, startling and presumptuous as is the treatment, it is not irreverent. Gently and tenderly *Manson* seeks to quell the tumult in the soul of his brother, the *Vicar*, whose chief sin seems to be—and therein lies a weakness of "The Servant in the House" as a drama—that he has disowned a drunken, shiftless brother, described as "a gentleman of necessary occupation." That occupation is the cleaning of drains, and to the *Vicar's* house comes the outcast in pursuance of his unpleasant duties.

The five acts are played in a single setting, with only one intermission of more than a few seconds. The *Bishop*, the *Vicar*, the *Drainman* and *Manson* preserve the necessary contrast. The *Bishop* is "a bishop of stocks and bonds," typifying Mammon.

Manson puts uplifting thoughts in the mind of the *Drainman*. He takes him by the hand and calls him "comrade." Then he reveals the greed and hypocrisy of the *Bishop* and drives him from the house. Little by little he brings the *Vicar* and the *Vicar's* wife to a broader sense of brotherly love, and convinces them that the *Drainman* must be taken to their hearts.

Light breaks on the little household gradually, and one by one its members feel the influence, the gentleness, the great absorbing love of "the servant." The most stirring and the most powerfully symbolic scene comes in the last act, where the *Drainman*, all covered with muck and filth, explains that he has examined the drains in the vicarage and found that they, with all their foulness and rottenness, lead to the church. And underneath the church he has discovered a charnel-house, filled with rotting bones and stench and disease. At the conclusion of his description the *Vicar*, now thoroughly aroused, throws aside his churchman's garb, rolls up his sleeves, and pledges himself to go into the drains with his brother and remove the filth.

During the absorbing harangue—and for sheer brutality and frankness its

equal is not known in the contemporary drama—the *Drainman* refers to *Manson*—who, you are to understand, represents the Savior—as "a bloke," "a fair knock-out," "togs on 'im like an Earl's Court Exhibition," and "Ole Togs."

There is no better way to describe this remarkable play than to repeat the *Drainman's* recital of the pollution he has found under the vicarage and under the church.

Drainman: "I'm the drainman, see! Thought you might be mistakin' me for summat else, if you wasn't told. I came 'ere to talk about my job. P'raps you'll think as it ain't a tasty subjic before a lot o' nice, clean, respectable people as never 'ad anything worse on their fingers than a bit of lawn-dirt, playing crokey; but *some one* 'as to see to the drains; *some one* 'as to clear up the muck of the world. I'm the one. An' I'm 'ere to tell you about it.

"Well, I come to this 'ouse this mornin', I don't mind ownin' it, in a rotten bad frame of mind. A bloke I met, as knowed me better than I knowed myself—'e changed me. Don't know 'is name. 'E was a fair knock-out—got togs on 'im like an Earl's Court Exhibition—'e changed me; 'e taught me my own mind; 'e brought me back to my own job—drains.

"Moment I stuck my 'ead in this 'ouse, I knowed as summat was wrong in my line, and I ses to myself: 'Wot oh, 'e ain't such an almighty liar, arter all—that's drains.' An' drains it was, strike me dead—arskin' your pawdon.

"Well, soon as Ole Togs got done with 'is talk, I got my smeller dahn, follered up the scent, an' afore I knowed where I was I was in it up to my eyes.

"I followed up that drain—I wasn't goin' to stick till kingdom come inside your little mouse 'ole out there. No, I said: 'Where's this leadin' to? What's the glory use o' flushin' out this blarsted bit of a sink, with devil knows wot stinkin' cesspool at the end of it? So, up I go through the sludge, puffin' an' blowin' like a bally ole cart-'orse. Strooth, it seemed miles. It ud 'a' done your heart good, it would really. Rats—'undreds on 'em, ma'am—I'm bitten clean through in places. 'Owever, I pushed my way through some'ow, 'oldin' my nose and fightin' for my breath, till at last I got to the end—and then I saw wot was the matter.

"It's under the church—that's where it is. I know it's the church, 'cos I 'eard 'The Church's One Foundation' on the orgin rumblin' over my 'ead. You'd never guess wot I saw there, not if you was to try from now till glory aleloolyer. The biggest backhander I ever did, s'help me.

"It ain't no drain at all! It's a grive. Yes, one o' them whoppin' great beer vaults as you shoves big bugses' corpses inter. What d'yer think o' that, now?

"Talk abaht coffins an' shrouds an' bones an' dead men gone to rot, they wasn't in it, wot I saw dahn there. Madame Twosoes is a flea-bite to it. Lord! And the rats an' the stink an' the bloomin' gravy thick up to your eyes—I never thought there could be such a lot o' muck an' dead things all in one place before. It was a fair treat, it was, I take my oath. Why—why, it may cost a man 'is life to deal with that little job."

Vicar: "The stench—the horror—the darkness!"

Drainman: "What's it matter if the comrides up above 'av light an' joy an' a breath of 'olesome air to sing by?"

Vicar: "Then, by God and all the powers of grace, you shall not go alone. Off with these lies and make-believes! Off with these prisoner's shackles! They cramp and stifle me. Freedom! Freedom! This is no priest's work—it calls for a man. Now, if you're ready, comrade, you and I, together!"

The performance of the play is well-nigh flawless. Tyrone Power's portrayal of the bestial, befouled *Drainman* is tremendously convincing. Walter Hampden has the delicate task of presenting *Manson* so that the characterization will not seem profane. He accomplishes it discreetly, gently and forcefully.

And now, O you playgoers, look on that picture and then on this! "Girls"

is its subject; Clyde Fitch, its painter. Mr. Fitch never has been accused of introducing in any one of his plays—and "Girls" is his fiftieth—a hero, who at some stage of development did not reveal qualities of the cad. He has not deviated from this principle in his latest play, for, true to the Fitchian type, the hero first presents himself as an interloper in the bedchamber of three young women who are disrobing for bed. The scamp doesn't offer so much as an apology, but gathers the startled young women around him and tells them the story of an escapade with a married woman, the unexpected return of a doting old husband, and his doctrine of any port in a storm.

But when it comes to the weaker sex, Mr. Fitch knows every trick of character-drawing. Wherefore, Mr. Fitch himself must explain. He never approaches greatness unless he is laying bare the soul of a woman, as notably in the case of "The Truth."

Pity 'tis, 'tis true, but fully twice as many persons are rallying nightly at the lobby of Daly's Theater where "Girls" is established than at the portals of the Savoy where great moral truths, sermons, Scriptural teachings, and symbolism are on sale for the same price. In the vocabulary of the art-loving theatrical manager, "Girls" has "caught on," and a silly little play it is at best.

The plot is easy. Three young women pledge themselves to be man-haters. They repeat their vow solemnly each evening over crossed hat-pins, and for a concluding ceremony assemble at the piano and sing "No Wedding Bells for Me." The intrusion of Mr. Fitch's hero sets their three hearts to fluttering. At the very beginning of the succeeding act one of the trio announces her engagement to a theatrical manager, and the remaining two are clearly in love with the junior member of a law firm and his clerk respectively. The junior member is the intruder of a few evenings before, and—well, the whole thing is no more logical than the burlesque of "The Merry Widow" at Weber's Music Hall next door. It merely is light and amusing and irresponsible.

The chatter of the three heroines in their boudoir-drawing-room scene, the transformation of the bookcase, the Morris-chair and the window-seat into beds after the company has gone, and the glimpses of New York cliff-dwelling existence are ludicrous. The second act, laid in the law-office of an ostensibly serious and dignified firm of practitioners, is impossible.

Two of the "Girls" have taken positions in the office as stenographers. From the moment of their entry they rule supreme. They give orders to the venerable senior member and his junior partner, override the managing clerk, entertain and advise clients, issue orders to everybody in sight, and generally conduct themselves in a manner to earn instant dismissal from any institution other than an insane asylum or a Clyde Fitch comedy.

As usual, Mr. Fitch has written brightly, if not always logically. The briskness, the breeziness, and the froth of the comedy doubtless are the qualities that appeal. He may not be aware of it, but the scenes in the law-office are in reality comic opera without music.

The head-line in one of the morning newspapers aptly describes the net result of "The Royal Mounted," a play by the sons of the late Henry C. de Mille, that came late in the season to the Garrick Theater. The head-line read: "'The Royal Mounted' is not so bad." The author of the line might have added, "And not so good," and still kept within the boundaries of truth.

Such novelty as the play possesses lies in its locale. It is a melodrama of the lumber-camps of the Canadian Northwest; a melodrama with the fangs removed, a play of adventure and excitement with nothing more thrilling than a murder by hearsay. We have had "polite vaudeville"; perhaps "The Royal Mounted" is polite melodrama.

All of the situations we have met before. We know them intimately. We call them by their first names, and

in desperation we call them other names.

During the vogue of rag-time melodies there was a song in which the refrain ran: "You was a good ole wagon, but you done broke down." The same sentiment applies to the plot of "The Royal Mounted." It is a good plot; it always was a good plot. Years and years ago we indorsed it, and we cannot go back on it now. At the same time we cannot be expected to become indecorously exuberant over the decrepit old plot any more than we should expect to array ourselves in great-grandfather's coat and be accepted as a 1908 fashion-plate.

The Royal Mounted, concerning which the play has been written, is an organization of police. The members are recommended enthusiastically as the crackerjack coppers of the world, combining the cunning of Sherlock Holmes with the intrepidity of a mining-camp sheriff.

"There are four stages to a murder in the Northwest," declares *Lieutenant O'Byrne* of the Mounted. "First, there's the murder. Then there's the Mounted. Then there's a hanging, and then there's peace."

Cyril Scott was *Lieutenant O'Byrne*, and incidentally the star. *O'Byrne* is sent into a lumber-camp to run down a murderer, and discovers that the guilty man is his sweetheart's brother. There you have the hoary old situation of deciding between love and duty. *O'Byrne* picks love, and is released from his predicament just before the final curtain by a simple explanation that might far more reasonably have been made at the beginning. But then there would have been no play, and the Garrick Theater has been sadly in need of an attraction.

O'Byrne, as portrayed by Mr. Scott, was a species of Chauncey Olcott without song. He was not asked to strain such histrionism as he possesses, and he didn't.

And now step this way, ladies and gentlemen, for your romantic drama. E. H. Sothern brought his long and brilliant engagement at the Lyric Theater to a close with a new dramatization of "Don Quixote" by Paul Kester. Not until this stage version had found its "second wind" did the critics and the public begin to appreciate its full value.

In the beginning, Mr. Kester endeavored to retain too many of the adventures of Cervantes' Sorrowful Knight. It was past midnight when the last curtain fell on the opening performance, and the impression carried away by the audience was that of hubbub and hobgoblins. In less than forty-eight hours, Mr. Kester and Mr. Sothern, realizing the dangers of excess, administered the dramatist's antifat remedy of scissors and blue pencil, and reduced the play to fit the post-performance supper-hour of the Broadway contingent.

In its second edition "Don Quixote" is worth an evening of any man's time; not because it is per se a great play, but because it is a fairly coherent and rational dramatic version of one of the world's most fascinating stories, and more especially because Mr. Sothern's portrayal of the *Sorrowful Knight* is exquisitely pathetic, splendidly dignified, and doggedly consistent.

As *Don Quixote* Mr. Sothern has made plausible, appealing and vivid one of the greatest figures in literature. Beginning with his make-up—a triumph in itself—he struck the right note. Through all the vagaries of the deluded knight he never for an instant lost the chivalrous bearing born of a beautiful soul. And through all the commotion the pathos of the character das dominant. When this *Don Quixote*, in the midst of a jeering, ribald assemblage, cried out, "*Dulcinea* is the fairest woman in the world," one was moved to wish that the delusion was true.

Mr. Sothern's individual performance justified the effort. Those that do not find much to admire and enjoy in it are disrespectfully invited to attend a performance of "Girls."



Some of the good things, present and to come, in Ainslee's. Rex Beach's "The Barrier" on the whole interesting, although it strains credulity a bit. "Flower o' the Orange," by Agnes and Egerton Castle, exceedingly well done. A very charming book is "The Sentimental Adventures of Jimmy Bulstrode," by Marie Van Vorst. May Sinclair's "The Judgment of Eve" incredibly sordid and repulsive. "The Coast of Chance," by Esther and Lucia Chamberlain, an ingenious mystery story. Neith Boyce's "The Bond" may be called a lesson in matrimony. A book to be read with thorough refreshment is Martha G. D Bianchi's "A Modern Prometheus." "The Silver Blade," by Charles E Walk, is a detective story with at least one novelty

MR. FRASER'S complete novel in this number of AINSLEE'S is, according to our way of thinking, as good a story of its kind as any that has appeared since he wrote and published his novel called "Thoroughbreds."

The recent agitation on the subject of betting at race-tracks has naturally and properly emphasized the abuses that have grown up in connection with horse-racing, but apart from the evils of gambling nothing has been said against contests of speed between high-bred horses. Mr. Fraser's story is entirely free from this unpleasant element, and he has made an interesting, exciting and dramatic tale.

As we promised last month, Mr. Steel Williams contributes another Western story, and he will continue to do so indefinitely. His work is steadily improving, as every one who reads him can testify, and the July number will have the best story in his series thus far.

Among other features in the July number will be a complete novel by Doctor Henry C. Rowland which, we predict, will be considered among the best that have ever appeared in AINSLEE'S, if, indeed, it is not given the highest rank. It is written with a dash and spontaneity that are characteristic of Doctor Rowland's style, and bears testimony to his love of his work and the sincerity with which it is done. It is full of action from beginning to end, and the characters are of the sort that compel interest and attraction.

We venture to say that all our readers will be particularly interested in the announcement that O. Henry will have a story in the July number, and not only that, but he will be among the contributors several times more before the end of the year. It seems hardly worth while to say more than this, because we have hitherto said so much about him, and also because nothing that can be said further than this will convey anything new to readers of magazine fiction.

Besides these authors, it will be of much interest to the reading public to know that Mrs. Wilson Woodrow will have another of her charming stories in the July number. Anne Warner has contributed a short story in her best vein, and Virginia Tracy will be represented by an absorbing tale of stage

life. Douglas Z. Doty and Kellogg Durland have collaborated in an exciting adventure romance, the first, we believe, that they have done together, and it may be followed by others.

Another Alaskan melodrama is Rex Beach's new book, "The Barrier," published by Harper & Brothers.

This differs from "The Spoilers" chiefly in the fact that Mr. Beach has attempted to do no more than merely to write a story and has not complicated his task by seeking to make it a means of exposing abuses in the administration of the law.

Though, in the matter of construction, the book has its weak spots and though it has the fault of provincialism in the author's obvious belief that all the human life and activity that are worth while are to be found on the frontiers of civilization, yet it is on the whole an interesting story.

It turns upon the secret which "Old Man Gale" brought with him to Alaska from California, and which he and his Indian wife had carefully guarded for fifteen years.

In the absence of personal experience we are a little puzzled as to the ease with which Lieutenant Burrell was deceived as to Necia. If he was in love with her it seems a little curious that he accepted without question the information that she was a half-breed. We speak with due humility, of course, and subject to correction; nevertheless it strains credulity a bit to have to accept this as well as the paternity for the girl of such a reprobate as Stark.

There is plenty of blood and bones in the story, supplied chiefly by Stark and Runnion, and something softer by Doret's self-renunciation.

"Flower o' the Orange," by Agnes and Egerton Castle, published by the Macmillan Company, is a volume of short stories which takes its title from that of the first tale.

One can get almost as good an idea of the book as any review can give by a reference to the table of contents. "Flower o' the Orange" is a story of the early nineteenth century; "The Young Conspiracy" is one of 1745; "The Great White Deeps," 1749; "My Rapier and My Daughter," 1595; "The Great Todescan's Secret Thrust," 1602; "Pomona," Charles II.'s reign; "The Mirror of the Faithful Heart," early Georgian.

This chronology and the authorship of Agnes and Egerton Castle make further description almost superfluous. We may be sure to meet fair and noble dames, brave lords, boastful braggarts, and villains of various sorts. But the kind of romances that these authors write is unfailingly interesting, and, of its kind, exceedingly well done. Nobody who likes the work of the Castles need be afraid of disappointment in these new stories.

Miss Marie Van Vorst has given us a very charming book in "The Sentimental Adventures of Jimmy Bulstrode," published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

The interest of the story, as the title hints, centers in the character of the hero, Jimmy Bulstrode, who is not, as probably a good many readers may infer, the typical "six feet of young American manhood," but a middle-aged bachelor, a New York man of the world, a man of leisure, a spectator, somewhat of a cynic, whose cynicism is, however, tempered by a devotion to his friends, by an instinctive gentleness, a broad charity and a natural tendency to help others, and above all by a hopeless love for a married woman which his native chivalry keeps well within bounds.

As it turns out, when circumstances remove obstacles, Mrs. Falconer is found to be as much in love with him as he has been with her, and they neither of them lose anything because of their self-restraint, which is of course as it should be.

Meanwhile, their sentiment for each other makes them very sympathetic with and tolerant of the emotions of other couples, and they are thus able, in some cases, to avert disaster threatening their friends and in others to bring happiness.

Altogether the book shows Miss Van Vorst's versatility and at the same time marks the progress of her craftsmanship.

In "The Judgment of Eve," published by Harper & Brothers, Miss May Sinclair has given to the world about as repulsive and sordid a tale as could well be conceived.

It is the story of the gradual degeneration of two rather weak natures, brought about by the clash of youthful hopes and illusions with a hopeless environment. When Arthur Galty and Aggie Purcell became man and wife, in spite of their commonplaceness they did have certain aspirations and an outlook on life that deserved a different kind of realization from that which came to them.

But the ordinary cares and responsibilities of domestic life were too much for them and both gradually succumbed, leaving them practically nothing but a sort of dumb loyalty to one another and love, if the emotions that were left to them could be so dignified.

It hardly seems credible that the most uncompromising devotee of realism can commit himself to the claim that this sort of thing can be called art, and when, to the narrative of the mental decay of these two unfortunates, is added the miserable climax of which it is hardly decent to speak, we are only left to wonder how such a tale could be written, much less published.

"The Coast of Chance," by Esther and Lucia Chamberlain, published by the Bobbs-Merrill Company, is a mystery story of sufficient ingenuity and complication to keep the interest keyed up to the highest point.

The disappearance of "the famous Chatworth ring" was not, in itself, a matter of enough significance to make a very remarkable story, in spite of its intrinsic value and odd character. That which gives the story its chief interest is the character of the people involved in the loss of the ring, the suspicions under which they rested, and the catastrophes that threatened them.

Flora Gilsey played an important, if involuntary, part in the jewel's adventures after the theft, and her encounters with certain of the Chinese population of San Francisco, which may seem plausible enough to citizens of that extraordinary town, will have a kind of fantastic interest for the slower-going population of the East. If San Franciscans are to be believed, ordinary human experience counts for little there.

The pursuit of the ring leads all of the people in the book a very merry chase, which terminates synchronously with the climax of the love-story. The curtain falls upon the happiness of Flora and Chatworth and the passing of the latter's check for twenty thousand dollars for the return of the ring. So the action of the story is focused with unusual accuracy.

"The Bond," by Neith Boyce, published by Duffield & Co., is a well-written and interesting story of the early conjugal experiences of two artists, embracing all the emotional ups and downs that fiction has made us familiar with in the lives of such people.

Basil and Teresa are very charming grown-up children, with decent standards and habits of life, well meaning and loving, both a little too ardent, however, to make it easy for them to be happy in the conventional observances of married life. The period of the story corresponds to the period which is almost certain to come sooner or later into all human loves and friendships, the period of doubts and questionings, when if the close relationship is to be preserved there must be on one side or the other, if not on both,

a conscious exercise of the will to love or something equivalent to it.

That there was not an irretrievable catastrophe in this case was due to the existence of a subtle bond which, apparently, the story is designed to exemplify and from which the book takes its name. The fact that there were another man and another woman gives some piquancy to the tale, though at the darkest moment it is obvious that neither had any attraction for Basil or Teresa; it was a case of unrequited love both for Mrs. Perry and Crayven.

The book is interesting and well worth reading in spite of its lack of incident and action. It is neither a character nor a psychological study, though both are present; it is rather a lesson in matrimony.

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With the charm of its picturesque setting, "A Modern Prometheus," by Martha G. D. Bianchi, published by Duffield & Co., takes immediate hold upon the reader's interest.

The heroine is an American girl sojourning in Perugia, whose marriage with a dissolute Italian nobleman has taken from her the illusions of international romance and left her its bitter fruits. The Prometheus, a Jesuit priest, possesses that fascinating species of personality which makes itself strongly felt when apparently least concerned with its immediate environment, and becomes a dominant interest in her life with, later, a conscious purpose. The combination of power and literary restraint which is evident in the painting of this unusual character, scores one of the writer's strongest points, and maintains a subtle, absorbing interest.

The fate of Count Variani after his intrigue with a peasant girl, the intense American lover and gay cousin, the fine type of older woman, all bring telling values into the development of the plot, and from time to time the scholarly ascetic steps in, his appearance never exceeding certain artistic and psychological limitations which the author seems thoroughly to comprehend, yet holding the other's destiny in his hands with a magnetic and all but certain grasp.

There are plenty of clever talk, touches of shrewd New England humor which stand out deliciously here and there as the background becomes somber, and almost an embarrassment of rich, vivid description.

It is a book to be read with thorough refreshment, in one's thankful release from "world problems" and sordid realism.

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"The Silver Blade," by Charles E. Walk, published by A. C. McClurg & Co., is a detective story which has at least one novelty that helps to deepen the mystery of the murder and to direct suspicion to the innocent. When the final explanation of methods and motives is made most readers will have a sense of curiosity satisfied, a curiosity stimulated all the way through the book by the seeming impossibility of the innocence of Doctor Westbrook in the face of the conviction that he had nothing to do with it.

Otherwise the story follows the conventional rules governing detective fiction; the crime itself, the complication of clues and incriminating circumstances, the reasoning of the detective, and the appearance, toward the close, of the real facts, hitherto carefully kept in the background.

An attempt has been made by the author to do something original in the characterization of the detective, Captain John Converse, but the result is not altogether satisfactory. In some way he does not seem to measure up to the author's idea of him, because we see, upon reflection, that what is supposed to be astuteness consists largely of mannerisms. Not that he really lacks the right sort of stuff for a successful detective, but that the author has failed to do him justice.

The genuine thing in detective stories must have a love interest of course, and Mr. Walk has been good enough

to give us two represented by Clay Fairchild and Joyce Westbrook and Doctor Westbrook and Charlotte Fairchild.

Mrs. Paul Abercrombie Harwell Rowland, otherwise Susan, is the presiding genius of Jacques Futrelle's little book which he calls "The Simple Case of Susan." It is published by D. Appleton & Co.

Besides Susan, who is drawn by the author as the very embodiment of sophisticated innocence and timid daring—if such a combination of paradoxes is possible—we have a couple of young army officers, and as such they are, of course, examples to the rest of the world of the men who "do things," and Marjorie Stanwood, an heiress with brown eyes, the most dangerous sort, an heiress and probably the most beautiful young woman in the world, by whom Lieutenant Faulkner is temporarily diverted from his duties as a member of an advisory board of engineers.

Another character is Dan Wilbur, but as he is a civilian, he is introduced mainly by way of contrast to the efficient brilliancy of the army men, and before the end is reached he is made to cut rather a sorry figure.

If Susan had not at the outset conveyed to Wilbur an entirely wrong impression as to the identity of her husband, Lieutenant Rowland, there would have been no story to tell worth telling, and the consequent loss to art would not have been irreparable. Nevertheless, the tale is not without interest and in the manner of telling is sufficiently amusing.

It would be very easy to be hypercritical about "The House of the Lost Court" if one were so disposed. Its author is Doña Teresa de Savallo, Marquesa d'Alpens, and is published by the McClure Company.

It is the story of "a magnificent old English mansion," about which "there hangs a deep mystery," of which the reader must inform himself. An American girl, Dolores Eliot, and her mother lease this house for a term of years in total ignorance of the mystery which is attached to it, and have no suspicion of anything unusual until they begin to realize that their neighbors avoid them.

By the merest accident Dolores encounters the cause of all the trouble, though for some time she does not appreciate the real significance of her discovery. Of course, in order that interest may be maintained the solution of the problem does not appear till the end, which also brings the climax of the heroine's love-story.

If one can read the book as he would a fairy-tale, with no expectation of satisfying a craving for realism, he will not be disappointed; indeed, he will be much interested and entertained, and it is more than likely that he will be refreshed by the originality of the plot and the charm of the style.

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"On a Margin," Julius Chambers, Mitchell Kennerly.

"The Golden Ladder," Margaret Potter. Harper & Bros.

"The Grey Knight," Mrs. Henry de la Pasture, E. P. Dutton & Co.

"The Husbands of Edith," George Barr McCutcheon, Dodd, Mead & Co.

"Mr. Crewe's Career," Winston Churchill, Macmillan Co.

"The Stage Door," Charles Belmont Davis, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"The Duchess of Dreams," Edith Macvane, J. B. Lippincott Co.

"King Spruce," Holman Day, Harper & Bros.

"The Clutch of Circumstances," James Barnes, D. Appleton & Co.

"The Voice of the City," O. Henry, McClure Co.

"Rose McLeod," Alice Brown, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

"The House in the Water," Charles G. D. Roberts, L. C. Page & Co.

"The Gulf," John Luther Long, Macmillan Co.

"The Wayfarers," Mary Stewart Cutting, McClure Co.

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No. 1. No. 2. No. 3. No. 4.

Clean Whole Wheat (No. 1) is separated into kernel and outer or bran-coat; the first containing carbohydrates and proteids (tissue-material and energy-storing elements); the second, phosphate of potash for rebuilding brain and nerve cells. The kernel is

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The Bran-Coat (No. 4) is mixed with molasses, roasted and ground separately, then blended with the other part of the wheat to form the perfected product—Postum.

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Bulls-Eye Kodak

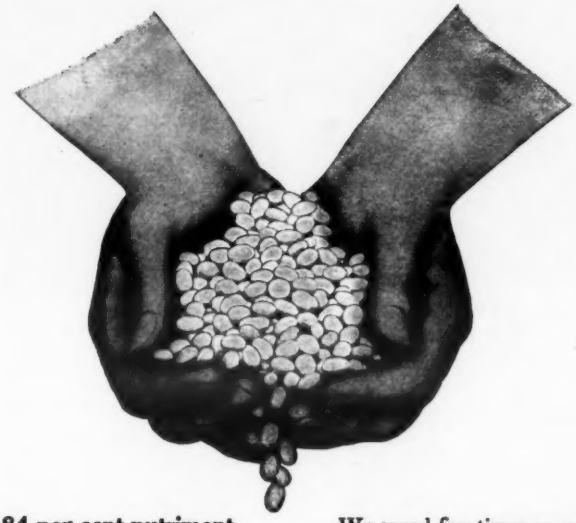
Pictures 3¼ x 4¼. Price, $8.00.

There was never a camera that gave more uniformly satisfactory results in the hands of the amateur than the No. 2 Bulls-Eye Kodak. Its simplicity and accuracy did away with most of the opportunities for making mistakes. The No. 3 Bulls-Eye is simply a little larger model of the same camera, making pictures of a more desirable shape and size. *Anybody can make good pictures with a Bulls-Eye Kodak.*

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Yet note how cheap they are.

See what you would save if you served them daily—served them in place of meat. And you can. Your people will never get tired of them when you serve Van Camp's.

We pay $2.10 per bushel to get the best beans grown. To have them picked out by hand from the choicest Michigan crops. We could buy beans for 30 cents.

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But we use only vine-ripened tomatoes. Not tomatoes picked green; not scraps from a canning factory.

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Van Camp's pork and beans
baked with tomato sauce

Van Camp's beans are all baked alike—baked until they are mealy. Yet they are nutty because they are whole. We bake in live steam—that's the reason.

Van Camp's have a delicious blend. That comes from baking the beans, the tomato sauce and the pork all together.

Van Camp's are not heavy, not hard to digest. That's because we apply more than twice the heat that you do. We separate the particles so the digestive juices can get to them.

In home-baking this is impossible. You lack the steam—lack sufficient heat.

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They will always choose Van Camp's. And their choice should be your choice. For think what it means to have beans cooked for you; to have them always ready to serve.

Prices: 10, 15 and 20 cents per can.

Van Camp Packing Company, Indianapolis, Ind.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you. I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



Hall's Vegetable Sicilian Hair Renewer

Falling Hair. Hall's Hair Renewer promptly stops falling hair because it destroys the germs that produce this trouble. We certainly believe that the intelligent and faithful use of this remedy will prove eminently satisfactory in these cases.

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Promotes Growth. Hall's Hair Renewer stimulates and nourishes the hair-bulbs and promotes a luxuriant growth of hair.

A Splendid Dressing. Hall's Hair Renewer does not interfere with curling or waving the hair.

Your Doctor. Show this formula to your family physician. He is acquainted with each ingredient, hence can give you a valuable opinion concerning its use for falling hair, dandruff, etc.

R. P. HALL & Co., Nashua, N. H.

Formula. Glycerin. Capsicum. Tea. Rosemary Leaves. Bay Rum. Sulphur. Boroglycerin. Alcohol. Water. Perfume.

DOES NOT CHANGE THE COLOR OF THE HAIR

Hall's Hair Renewer

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Strong's Arnica Tooth Soap

Antiseptic, preserves while it beautifies—sweetens the breath—hardens the gums—whitens the teeth—a leading dentifrice for a

Third of a Century

The metal package is the most convenient for travel or the home—no liquid or powder to spill or waste.

25c At All Druggists

(Sent postpaid if yours hasn't it.)

STRONG'S ARNICA JELLY

Ideal for sunburn, keeps the skin soft and smooth; nothing better for chaps, pimples, burns, bruises and all eruptions. The collapsible metal tube is convenient and unbreakable. If your dealer hasn't it, send to us. Sent postpaid for **25 Cents.**

Guaranteed under the Food and Drugs Act, June 30, 1906; Serial No. 1612,

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MENNEN'S Borated Talcum TOILET POWDER



"The Month of Roses"

calls for special complexion safeguards, to insure a summer of perfect skin condition and comfort.

Mennen's Borated Talcum Toilet Powder

used after **bathing**, keeps the skin smooth and healthy, prevents **Prickly Heat, Chafing** and **Sunburn**, insuring the much coveted "browning" without burning. After shaving it is delightful.

For your protection the **genuine** is put up in **non-refillable** boxes—the "**Box that Lox**," with Mennen's face on top. Guaranteed under the Food and Drugs Act, June 30, 1906. Serial No. 1542. Sold everywhere, or by mail, 25 cents. **Sample free.**

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Try Mennen's Violet (Borated) Talcum Toilet Powder—it has the scent of fresh-cut Parma Violets. **Sample free.**

Mennen's Sen Yang Toilet Powder, Oriental odor } No samples
Mennen's Borated Skin Soap (blue wrapper) }

Specially prepared for the nursery

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I must not [illegible]

A Summer Necessity



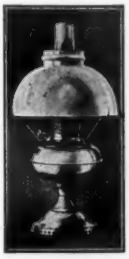
Because the New Perfection Wick Blue Flame Oil Cook-Stove concentrates heat at the openings on the stove top, it boils and bakes in less time than a coal or wood stove which wastes heat by radiating to the farthest corner of the room.

This is the reason, too, why the "New Perfection" keeps your kitchen so uniformly cool while you're working in it.

This wonderful comfort-quality, combined with great convenience and economy, makes the

NEW PERFECTION
Wick Blue Flame Oil Cook-Stove

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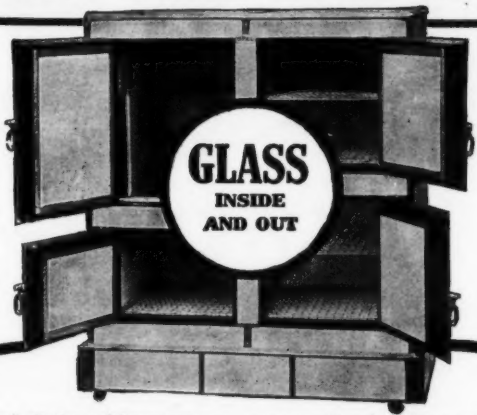
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Made of Milk-White Glass. Sanitary—Economical—Beautiful. Get the Book.



The Refrigerator "De Luxe" Unusual in Principle, Unequaled in Service. Get the Book.

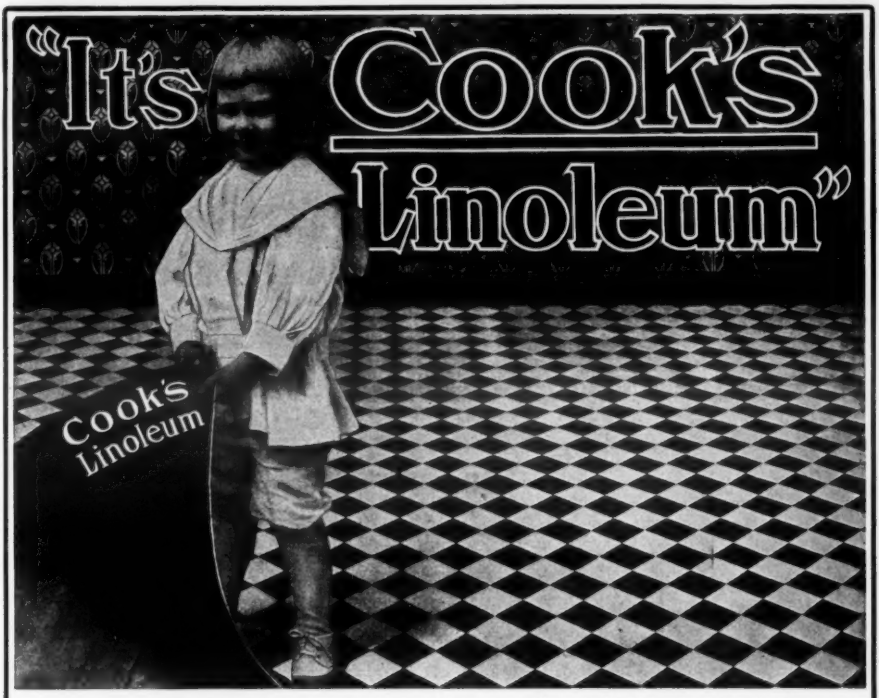
Think of all the refrigerators you ever saw, then imagine a refrigerator made entirely of milk-white *glass* inside and out. Not ordinary glass, but thick, white Opal glass bound with heavy, non-rusting, nickeled bands that shine like silver. That is the

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OPAL REFRIGERATOR

Between the walls of cold glass are the circulating air chambers that keep in cold and keep out heat—making a veritable cold storage system for the home. There is not a crack or crevice to retain moisture or collect anything. Unlike porcelain lining, Eureka opal glass is absolutely non-absorbent—the retention of odors being impossible. It can be polished like a mirror. Eureka Opal Glass Refrigerators are made in various sizes and sold by leading merchants. Every one interested in *"something better"* should send for a descriptive book.

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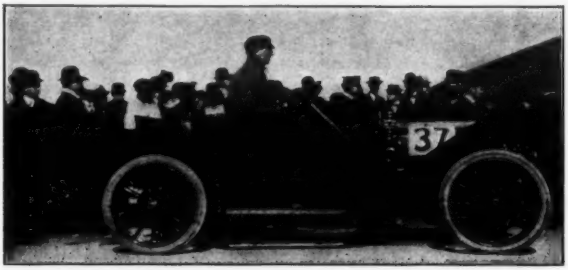
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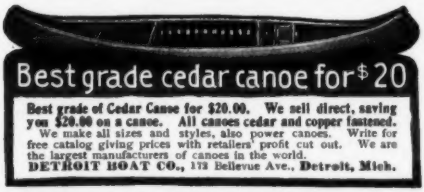
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30 H. P. Fully Equipped Stock Roadster, TIME, 42 4-5 seconds.



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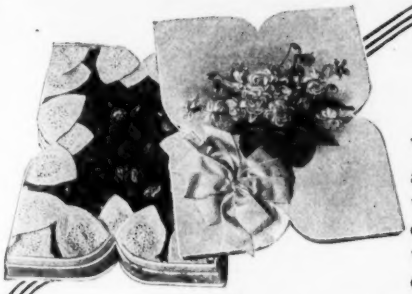
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Thomas Jefferson was a splendid athlete, a crack shot; and in his prime at the old Raleigh tavern he delighted to enjoy his "cakes and ale"—or dance half through the night with the fair maids of old Virginia.

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"The Writings of Thomas Jefferson," by Paul Lester Ford. Vol. 2, page 389; Vol. 5, page 511; Vol. 10, pages 113, 125, 251; Vol. 11, page 498, etc.
Morse's Biography, pages 2 and 3.
Shouler's History of U. S., Vol. 1, page 99.
Encyclopedia Americana, Vol. 3—"Jefferson."

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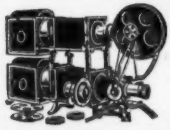
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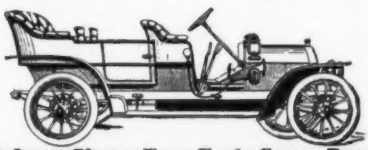
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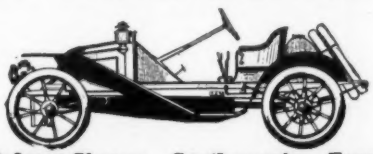
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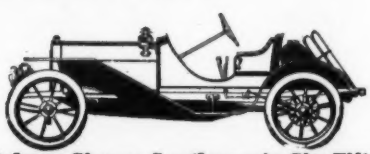
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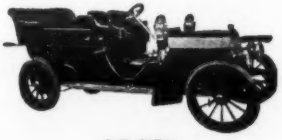
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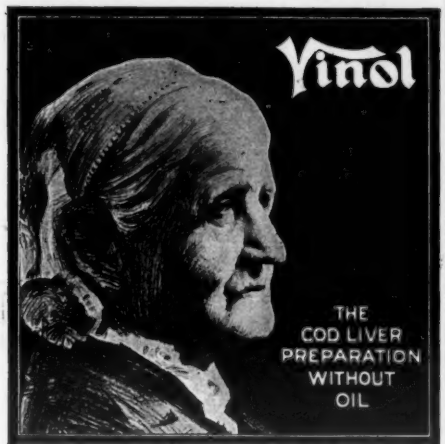
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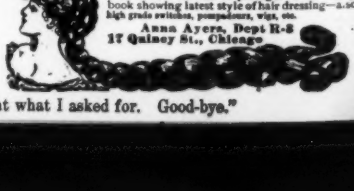


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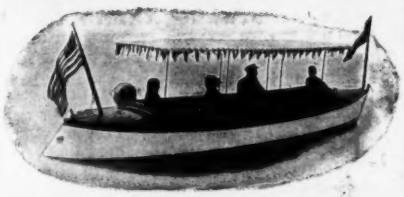
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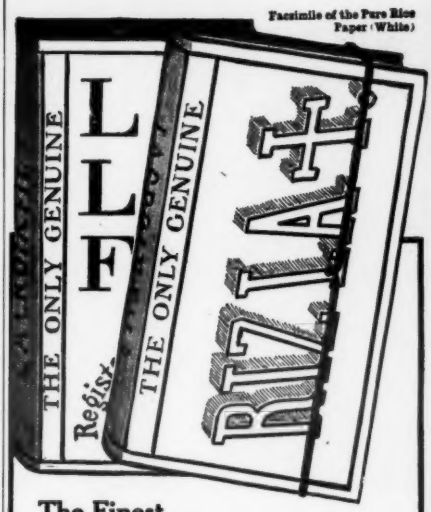
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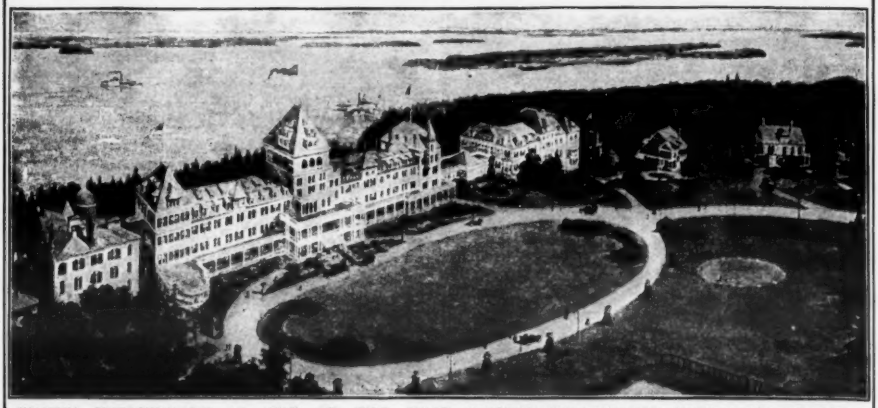


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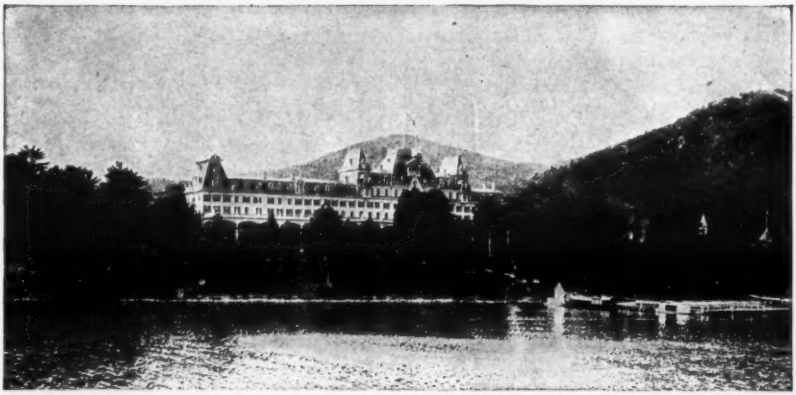
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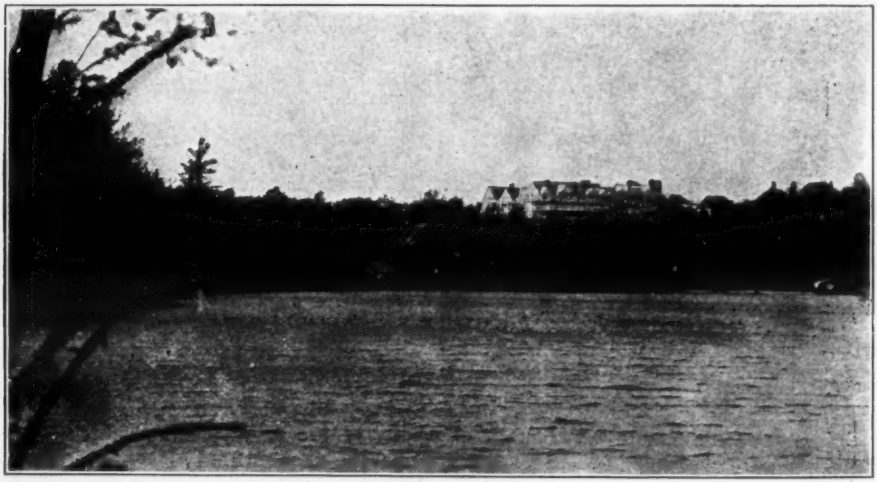
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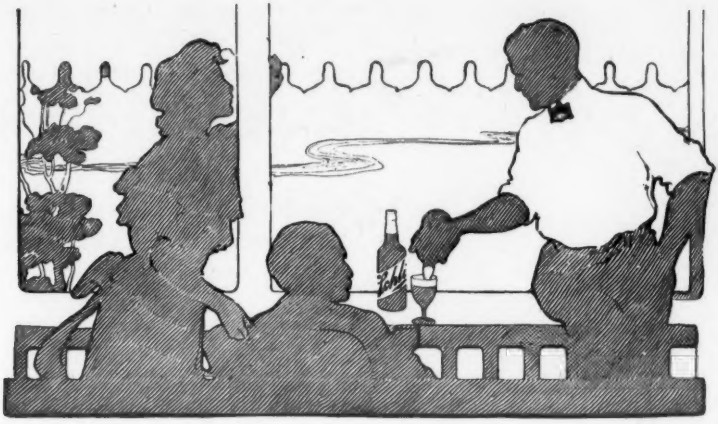
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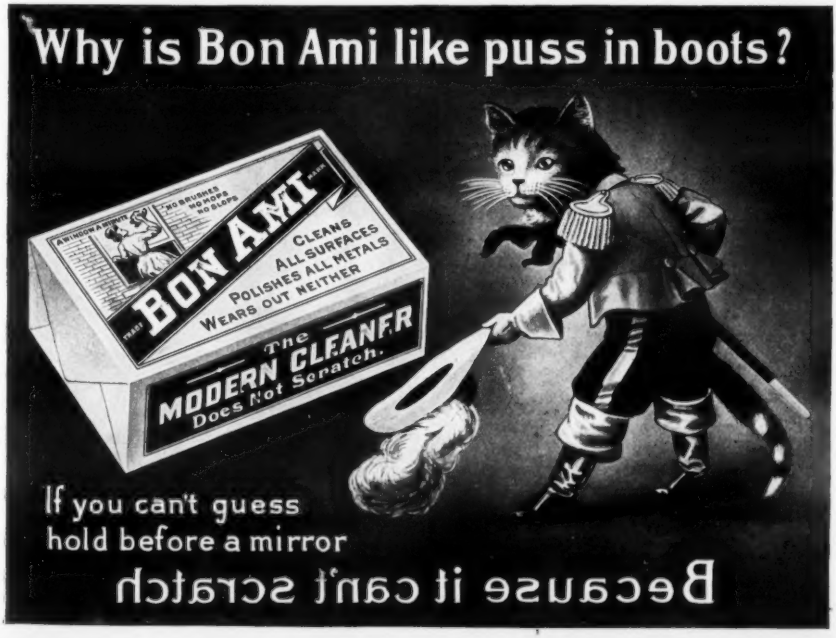
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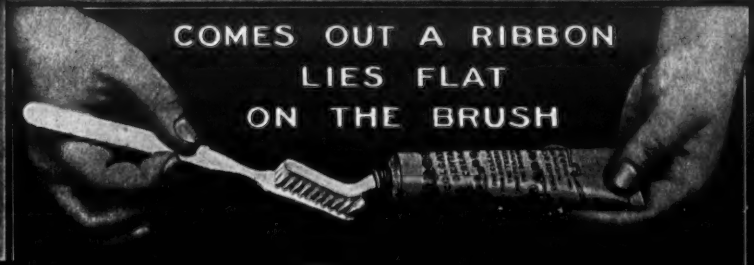


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